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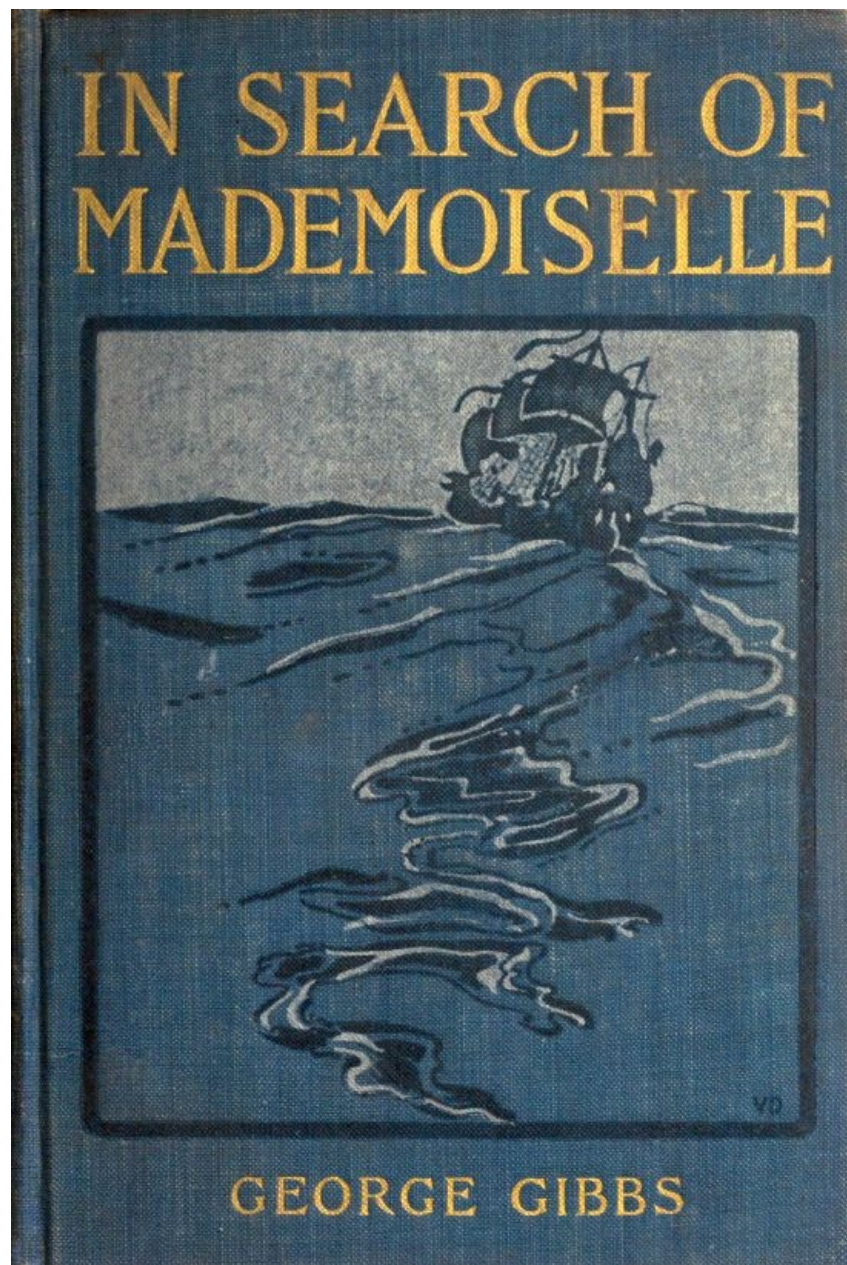
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN SEARCH OF MADEMOISELLE ***





"THEN I LEFT HER."

IN SEARCH OF MADEMOISELLE



By
GEORGE GIBBS

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& CO. 1901

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TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY FATHER
THE LATE MEDICAL INSPECTOR
Benjamin Franklin Gibbs,
UNITED STATES NAVY.

NOTE.

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There were no more vivid episodes in the colonization of the New World than those resulting from the attempts of the French people to gain a permanent foothold on our shores. This fact has long been recognized by sober historians as well as by the writers of fiction, for all the fascination of romance holds over the whole field of inquiry.

The most thrilling chapter in all this history, strangely neglected or overlooked by the romantic writers, is that of the struggle between the Spanish and French colonists for dominion over our own land of Florida. To me, whose profession it is to see pictures in the words of other men and to produce them, this historic page has appealed very strongly as the proper setting for a human drama—an inviting canvas upon which the imagination may paint a moving picture of the emotions, desires and passions—the loves and hates—of men and women like ourselves—against the somber and sometimes lurid background of historic fact.

I have tried, so far as I have used history, to be scrupulously exact. I have carefully read the original or authorized editions of the writings of Hakluyt, René de Laudonnière, and a number of others; but there is little to be found in them which will not also be found much more vividly depicted in the writings of Mr. Francis Parkman. Some of the names will be recognized. Jean Ribault, Laudonnière, Menendez, the Indians Satouriona, Olotoraca and Emola, and others, were all real men. As for those others who are of the imagination—as for Mademoiselle and those who searched for her, it is to be hoped that they will not be found at odds with the events and scenes in which they are placed. These things, or others like them, must have been, for the writer of historic fiction may rely on the fact that human nature remains much the same, no matter how great the lapse of years.

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G. G.

Bryn Mawr, March, 1901.

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IN SEARCH OF MADEMOISELLE.

[1]

CHAPTER I.

OF MY MEETING WITH MASTER HOOPER.

It has ever been my notion that apology is designed to conceal a purpose rather than to express it; that excuse is not contrition but only self-esteem. Therefore it seems ill-fitting to begin my narration thus, especially as there are many Spaniards who will say that I lie in all that I have written. But this will matter little to me, for I have had good confirmation in the writings of their own priests and chroniclers. Before many years are gone, I will rest peaceful in the churchyard at Tavistock and the ranting of any person, of whatever creed will avail little to disturb my bones. I shall die believing in God Almighty; that is enough for me.

These blind fanatics think themselves privileged to commit any crime in His name. They speak of God as though they owned Him; as though none other were in a position even to think of Him with any understanding. But indeed there is little to choose between the madmen of any races. Twenty years have barely passed since Thomas Cobham sewed eight and forty Spaniards in their own mainsail and cast them overboard. Not long ago certain English soldiers in Mexico filled a Jesuit priest with gunpowder, blowing him to pieces.

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I do not attempt to justify my part in the happenings of which I am to write, and the terrible retribution brought upon the Spaniards. I can only say that my own intimate life and love were so twined into these events that I followed where my wild heart led, as one distraught. It is enough that I loved—and now love—Diane better than woman was ever loved, and that I hated Diego with a hate which has outlived death itself.

Being but a blunt mariner and God-fearing man, with a knowledge of the elements rather than any great learning of the quiet arts, the description of these happenings lacks the readiness of the skilled writer, from whose quill new quips and phrases easily pass. Yet, what I, Sydney Killigrew, am to write has virtue in its reality; and its strangeness may even exceed those tales written by the sprightly wits of London, whom I am told it is the fashion of Her Majesty to gather about her.

For although a true report of the people of Florida has been made by Admiral Jean Ribault, the story of the great deception practised upon him by that Spaniard, Menendez de Avilés is now for the first time to be truly written by one who was with the Frenchmen at that time. And in view of the English settlements which may shortly be made by Her Majesty to the northward, it seems proper and valuable that this should be written.

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The more do I deem this my duty when I consider the cruel wars which men have fought for the modes by which the good God may be worshiped. Reformist, New Thinker, or whatever I may be, these events have only convinced me of the truth of the saying of my father, "Live thy *life* right, my young mariner, and thy mode of faith will be forgiven." That great, good father—naval commander of his king, Councilor of the Realm, noble in life as in lineage—upon whose talents and genius every half-hearted earl in the kingdom had laid a claim! For whatever he may have lacked in wisdom for the betterment of his own estate in the world, he had ever the wit to advise others to their great good fortune and happiness.

As I stood against a pile on the great dock at Plymouth and looked across the fine harbor through the network of rigging, I thought of the days of the Great Henry when good ships well manned and victualed, and commanded by men of valor and ingenuity, were ready at all hours to uphold the dignity of their king upon the water.

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Now all was changed. The mighty fleets that lay off in Plymouth Sound in Henry's day, had rotted in anchorage and not a halliard had been rove on a ship of the line for fifteen years. Discipline on royal ships was a matter of no account, for no man knew what change the week to come might work in his command. Even now the coasts of England lay open to the attack of any foreign ships that might choose to run in and fire the broadsides of their great new pieces of ordnance. Here in Plymouth harbor lay but four revenue ships of one hundred tons, and three converted merchant brigs which had been lightly armed. At London there were perhaps as many more, and these were all,—all that great fair England had in her harbors to ward off danger from the Spaniards, ever ready and watchful across the channel! There was naught for a seaman to do; and if a Bible or prayer-book chanced to be found on board any ship in Papist waters, she would be confiscate forthwith and her company of seamen would be carried to the prisons of the Inquisition.

A voyage in the narrow seas, from which I had returned but a few days before, more than anything else had given me the desire to see service with some foreign nation where a stout arm had more value than a heart set on "paternosters" or psalm books.

In truth, though this trouble was partly of my own making, I had had enough of the merchant service. To go back to Tavistock was not to my liking; for though I had a taste for peace among men I had no stomach for a life of idleness. I had been bred by my father to the sights and smells of the sea, the voice of which was more grateful to my ears than the sounds of the wood-birds which had ever seemed to me mere shrill and noisy pipings. And though in no manner a brawler, a life of enterprise suited me mightily.

As I labored in this quandary, a hand was laid upon my shoulder and a rough voice at my side said heartily, "Why,—is not this Sydney Killigrew of Tavistock?" And turning I saw Master David Hooper, my father's friend, who went as Master Commander in the last cruise of the *Great Harry*.

"None other, Captain Hooper!" said I, grasping with great joy his hairy fist. He held me off at arm's length and looked at me carefully, noting my great stature with evident enjoyment.

"The very image of thy father—though, by my faith, thou'rt built upon a more sumptuous scale. But, lad, what's wrong? You've the air of a farmer's boy two days from land."

And with that, after other exchanges of compliments, I told him how the world had gone with me; how our estates had fallen from bad to worse and how little chance there seemed of pursuing the calling upon the ocean I loved and wished for. He heard me through, tapping the while thoughtfully with his fingers upon the pier head.

"Come," said he at length, "let us go to some place where we can discuss thy affairs at leisure."

And he led the way from the dock up the street to the Pelican Inn, where seafaring men such as ourselves were wont to go for a pot or so of Master Martin Cockrem's own brewing. Once seated there in the quiet window seat overlooking the Sound, he questioned me closely as to my disposition in religious and political affairs. Then finding that I was not averse to taking up a true life of adventure upon the sea, he unburdened himself of his own plans for the future.

"You know, lad, of the state of the Royal Navy. Nothing I can say will make you feel that the merchant service is secure from injury at foreign hands. *Great Harry*, the wonder of all Europe, lies rotting her ribs yonder, and there are no capable ships afloat. France would love well to see us all singing our *ave Marias* and *salves* in our deck watches, yet she has no love for the greed of Philip. So I say, lad, there is no present danger."

"And yet," said I, "our commerce has been reduced to less than fifty thousand tons."

"Softly, boy. Our carrying may not be so great as in the days of Harry, but neither France nor Spain carry more. For our own brave fleet of gentlemen cruisers has made sad havoc of their barques on the ocean, and not a Papist ship dare show her nose within a dozen leagues of the Scilly Isles."

"But these free ships have no warrant from the Queen."

"Marry, lad, you've the wit of a babe scarce out of swaddling clouts. Can ye not see how the wind sits? The Queen knows well how much she needs these independent ships of war. For reasons of state she may not openly encourage our enterprises; but, laddie, I tell you she has a secret love for them. As for warrant, what more would ye have than that?"

And so saying, he put upon the bench between us a large parchment bearing the Great Seal of State. I scanned the document in an uncertain mood. For it set forth with many flourishes the rights "of one Master David Hooper to trade upon the oceans and to use his best endeavors to restrain by forcible or other means any enemies of Her Majesty from doing hurt or offering hindrance to any English persons or vessels on the high seas."

"Why, then, Captain Hooper," said I, "you are still in the Royal Service."

"We are all in the service of the Queen, lad. This license guarantees nothing and is in fact, to ordinary eyes, but a license to trade; and yet is it not of greater worth than a royal commission as captain in a navy which does not exist? A license to trade! Ouns! and such a trade! Why, lad, what is your ship's cargo of wool stuffs to an after-castle full of silver flagons and Spanish ducats—with a taste now and then of good Papist wine to clear the gunpowder from your throat? Let them prate. Their undoing will be the greater. I tell you, we gentlemen adventurers stand yet between Spain and the mastery of the seas. It may come to pass that one day they will try to cross the channel,—they will never land, lad. All this and more the young Queen knows well. For though she has a grievous way of looking displeasure at one minute, she has as happy a one of

winking merrily the next.

“So it is, ye see, that Drinkwater, together with Cobham, Tremayne, Throgmorton, and others among us have survived both the prison and the noose and put to sea again with no greater loss than the proportion of the captured articles Her Majesty sees fit to take for the replenishment of the Treasury. This then is how the matter stands; so long as we masters may sail successfully, making no complications with France or the other countries to the north and east, Queen Bess wishes us a light voyage out and a heavy one home, and indeed delights in our tales of fortune, to which she is wont to listen with sparkling eyes. The bolder the deeds the better they are to her liking.”

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I listened to this secret of state with eyes agog. Master Hooper paused in his talk long enough to drain his pot, which he set down abruptly upon the table.

“Come, Sydney,” said he with a smile, and stretching both hands toward me, “what say ye to a voyage with David Hooper for a shipmate, in a bottom staunch from batts-end to keelson, the wind and seas for servants, and never a doubt but that to-morrow will be better than yesterday! Or perhaps the gruntings of the swine at Tavistock hold newer charms? What say ye?”

Were it in my mind to debate upon an immediate answer, the mention of the pigs at Tavistock had done more to remove that uncertainty than aught else the gallant captain might have said. So I told him that his proposition was much to my liking, and, could I be of service, the swine at Tavistock might be larded for a lout with better land-legs and stomach than I.

Thus it was that I came to be the third in command of the *Great Griffin* on her fourth voyage out of Plymouth.

CHAPTER II.

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OF THE TAKING OF THE CRISTOBAL.

Like many other English ships engaged in private enterprises at this time, the *Great Griffin* was of no great bulk, having a tonnage of but a little more than three hundred. Nor had she the great after-castles and fore-castles of the Spanish galleons; but her bulwarks were stoutly built, and high enough to give such protection against the arrows and small pieces of the enemy as might be necessary to those who handled the tier of eighteen and twenty-pounders on the main deck. The after-castle, or poop as it had come to be called, was raised but one deck, and here again were mounted several patereros of modern fashion for use at short distances. The guns being all mounted upon the upper deck, made open ports below of no necessity; and so, even in rough weather, all of her ordnance could be brought to bear. The company was made up of merchant sailors and coasters,—taken altogether a hardy lot, yet gentle and quite unlike the reports of them which had reached our ears from the mouths of the Spaniards. The *Griffin* had three tall masts, and upon them were set sails patterned after the wonderful new invention of Master Fletcher of Rye. For the spars, in lieu of being made fast athwart the ship, so set to the masts as to lay forward and aft, it being thus possible by the hauling upon certain tackles to shift the sails from the one side to the other with great speed and small exertion. This invention permitted the ship to perform the strange feat of sailing almost directly into the wind, and allowed great advantages in getting to windward of larger ships. Though I had seen ships of this fashion in the Channel, never before had I sailed in one of them; so the easy manner of working and the simpleness of the rigging and tackling gave me a great pleasure.

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Standing on the after deck and looking forward one could note the strong lines of the barque. For, unburdened by the tophammer of the galleons, the bulwarks, barring the break at the fore-castle, took a graceful curve and met above the bed of the bowsprit, which made into the head where it was solidly bolted to the deck below. At the forward part of the fore-castle was mounted a great head of a dragon, with yawning mouth and wide eyes that looked over the waters ahead as though in search of its rightful quarry.

As I looked aloft and saw the new sails yellow and purple in the morning sun, big-bellied under the stress of a fine breeze from the east, the stays to windward taut as iron bars, the fellow at the helm leaning well to the slant of the deck, methought I had never seen so splendid a sight, and thankful was to I be alive and able to enjoy the beauty of it. The freshening breeze piled up the waters, and the green of the curl topped by its filmy cloud lifted itself to be caught in a trice and carried down the wind against the broad bows of the ship, or indeed at times, over the bulwarks, singing as it flew a mellow song more pleasing to my ears than any other earthly melody.

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Master Hooper, by reason of his previous service, maintained to a high degree the discipline of the old navy; and the company of the *Great Griffin* was thus unlike those of many of the free sailers of the time, which for the most part were composed of men who had used the sea in various ways but had no knowledge of the customs aboard regular ships of war. To gain that knowledge the men of the *Griffin* were each day exercised at the guns and were practised in the use of the sword and pike, while the bowmen and arquebusiers had targets set upon the fore-castle which they shot at from the poop with great speed and nice judgment. The pikemen and swordsmen had a proficiency I never saw equaled in France or in Spain; and Master Hooper—they called him “Davy Devil”—had an exercise which he called the fire practise, which more than aught else showed his ingenuity in providing against panic or mishap. Two years before, a large

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part of the company had rebelled against the second in command, who had caused one of their number to be strung up at the mast by the thumbs. Captain Hooper being ashore at the time, matters might have gone badly with the officer, had not a messenger been immediately despatched to the inn where he was stopping. Then came Master Hooper in great haste and caused the alarm of fire to be sounded. So nice had been his discipline that each man went to his appointed place, waiting there until Master Hooper appeared upon the poop and gave them a round speech upon the quality of obedience as practised in the navy of Henry the Great; to the end that, there being no fire to quench, they quenched themselves and went about their several duties.

On the morning of the second day from Plymouth we sighted a sail to the south, and discovered her to be a crumster of New Castle, bearing French Protestants from Havre to Bordeaux. The Captain, Master Tremayne, related a sad tale of the manner in which several persons who should have gone with him were taken by the officers of the Inquisition at Havre, as they were about to make their escape to his vessel.

The martial spirit of Master Hooper had done much to shake the serenity of the merchant life out of me, and the sight of several gentlewomen below decks aboard the crumster, with the pink rings of the manacles and the red scars of the fire still upon them, so inflamed me that I vowed no feeling of charity should stand between me and the duties of justice. Captain Tremayne also told us that during the night he had run afoul of a Spanish vessel of large size, who had hailed him and was in the act of sending boats aboard when a fog fell and he had pulled away under its friendly cover. After some further parley Captain Hooper set sail on the *Griffin* and steered boldly to the south, hoping thus to sight this Spanish sail during the afternoon; and true enough, in the first watch a large ship was made out under topsails and spritsail, standing for the coast of France. Upon sighting us the stranger hove about and took a course which the *Great Griffin* must cross in an hour or so.

Master Hooper, not knowing the strength of the ship and wishing to draw her further from the coast where Spanish cruisers in great numbers lay in wait for Huguenot vessels, put up his helm and stood off. The wind however blowing smartly, he soon found the *Griffin* to be drawing away from the stranger, who was laboring heavily in the great seas. In order therefore to slacken our pace without attracting notice, Master Hooper caused one of the spare mainsails to be lowered over the stern. So soon as this sail touched the water the speed of the *Griffin* caused it to fill and act as a drag which notably diminished our rate.

The Spaniard, for such the vessel now appeared, began drawing up, until in the course of an hour or so we could mark his tiers of guns as they frowned out over the water to windward. So light was our top hamper and so steady was the drag astern that we appeared to toss but little in the seas. But the Spaniard yawed and rolled in so frightful a manner that the sails at times seemed hardly to be restrained by their sheets, and flapped so noisily that they boomed like long cannon. She went over at so great an angle that her decks and castles crowded with the men at the guns were plainly to be seen.

Yet she presented a fair sight as she came down upon us. Despite the squall, the sun stole between the rifts of the clouds and here and there turned the tumbling purple mass into molten gold. The sails, catching the glint, were bright against the darkening horizon, and made so fair a vision that she seemed the abode of some water-princess rather than the battery of a horde of barbarians seeking life and unworthy profit.

When she came to what may have seemed a reasonable distance, a cloud of smoke puffed from a point forward and a column of spray shot up from the water at several hundred yards on our quarter. The Spanish colors were then run up quickly, and this movement was followed by Master Hooper, who sent to the mainmast head the pennant of the Queen.

Little by little the course of the *Griffin* had been laid to the windward, so the Spaniard now sailed at a distance of about half a mile; and as other shots now began falling somewhat nearer to us, the captain ordered the tackle which secured the drag-sail to be cast off, and they hauled it aboard. The *Griffin*, eased of her load, sprang forward like a scurrying cloud, the fellow at the helm moving her closer and closer into the eye of the wind till the starboard leeches were all a-tremble; then he held her as she was, enabling the Spaniard to come within gunshot.

The balls now fell too close for ease of mind, and the splinters from two of them, which struck us fair amidships, made an end to three gunners who were at their stations. In a great ferment I saw them carried below to the steerage, crying aloud in pitiful fashion. Captain Hooper hereupon let his ship go off a little to get her headway; the gunners cast loose the long eighteen-pounders, and the after guns were soon doing some execution in the enemy's rigging, and our shots still told after the Spaniard's shots began falling astern, or were so badly aimed that they flew wild and did us no hurt. Seeing that the range of the Spanish ordnance was shorter than our own and marking our great advantage in this matter, Captain Hooper put the ship upon the other tack and hove her to with the wind to the larboard, thus enabling the entire starboard broadside to be got into action. The roll of the *Griffin* greatly disturbed the gunners, but after some minutes, by firing high upon the roll to leeward, many shots flew straight for the Spaniard, so that soon we saw first his bowsprit and sail, and then his foremast go by the board.

There was a great commotion behind me, and I turned to see a fellow jumping up and down and slapping his thigh in great glee. "How now, sir," I said, somewhat sternly, "are you mad?"

He turned to me with a grin.

"'Twill be poor smellin' in the Bay o' Bisky, say I. Did ye see me snip off his nose? Did ye? 'Twas

my shot, sir. He'll want a bigger 'kerchief than a spritsail now, I'll be bound."

The wreck so encumbered the deck of the Spaniard that it was some minutes before any order could be brought about and the galleon again put to the wind. Master Hooper clewed up his lower sails, eased off his sheets, and taking up a position on the enemy's weather-quarter poured in at easy range a fire which swept the crowded decks and created a panic among the Spanish gunners. The cries of the wounded and dying we could hear faintly, but by the movements of the officers on the after-castle, who ran here and there brandishing their swords, we were able to surmise a sad lack of discipline among the company. On the *Griffin* the divisions waited for the word of command from the officers, firing thereupon with great regularity and precision. Though now, as we came again into range, the Spanish shots told here and there, and great white splinters flew in all directions, such men as were unhurt remained at their stations, the injured among them being replaced by others from those detailed to navigate the ship.

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So unwieldy was our adversary that she could not come up into the wind because of the great encumbrance of her head gear, and so was forced to wear around; and as she did so, Davy Devil who had been awaiting this opportunity to rake, fired the entire larboard broadside. The *Griffin*, no longer lying in the trough of the sea, sailed more steadily than before, and the effect of this broadside was terrific. Not less than four shots went through the ports of the Spaniard's after-castle and one, more lucky than the others, passed just over the rail and struck the mainmast below the yard, and over it went on the next roll to leeward, the tackling dragging with it the mizzen-topmast which flew asunder at the cap with a crackling heard loudly above the booming of the ordnance.

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"She'll need a new bonnet, Master Killigrew, to be in the fashion again," said Davy Devil behind me.

We could not at this time have been at a greater distance than two cable-lengths and Master Hooper, believing the enemy about to strike his colors, brought his sails home and directed the helmsman to haul up alongside. No sign being heard or seen, two anchors were got out and men lay aloft on the yards ready to cast them upon the Spaniard's decks. Three,—four minutes, Master Hooper waited, withholding his shot. Then, the Spanish demi-culverins again opening fire upon us to our great disadvantage, the word was given to discharge another broadside, the gunners then to crouch behind the bulwarks and cubbridges and prepare to board.

No ship could have withstood the shock of this fire! For discharged at such close range the shots tore through the bulwarks and planking with a horrid sound, the splinters, as we found, killing and maiming many who had gone below for protection.

At this moment a single tall figure appeared upon the after-castle making a signal of submission. Upon which Master Hooper sheered off and hove the *Griffin* into the wind that he might mind his damages and care for his wounded.

The weather having moderated, a boat was called away to go aboard the prize, and Master Hooper giving me charge, I put off for the Spaniard. On account of the heavy sea still running the boarding of the vessel was no easy task. In spite of the dismantled rigging which lay over her sides, she wallowed far down in the trough like a shift-ballast, the seas dashing against her and lashing the foam over her waist in feathery clouds. At length, with some difficulty, the coxswain hooked a ring-bolt in her side to leeward and I hauled myself over the bulwarks.

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On deck a gruesome sight awaited us. The wreckage of the foremast and the yards lay where they had fallen and obscured the view of the fore-castle where a party of the company were hacking away at the wreck with their axes and swords. The ship was flush-decked in the waist, after the fashion of vessels in the carrying trade, and the men who worked the guns had thus been exposed to the worst of our fire which had raked them *en echelon*—as the French have it—from foremast to poop. Many of the cannon, small culverins and swivels of Italian make, were dismantled and lay askew, frowning inboard. Piled here and there were bodies, many lacking in human semblance and presenting a ghastly spectacle after the cleanly decks of the *Great Griffin*.

Moving carefully over the slippery decks, I came at last to the poop, below which stood one who, by reason of his immense stature, towered head and shoulders above those around him. I am not like to forget this early impression made upon my mind by Diego de Baçan; for, surrounded as he was by a scene of blood, there seemed some demoniac sympathy between his figure and the carnage about him. There was that in the contour of his face which reminded me of the doughty Ojeda, possessing a hideous beauty like only to that of the evil one. The sun behind him glinted on the visor of his morion from the shadow of which his eyes gleamed darkly. His black beard, which came at two points, framed in a jaw set squarely enough on his great neck, and his wide shoulders even over-topped mine both for breadth and height. He leaned easily with one hand upon the rail, looking, in his polished breast piece, so splendid that I could not but mark the difference between his garb and mine, which was but that of the merchant seaman, ungarnished by any trappings of war.

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Scorning the salute I proffered him, he spoke coldly, in English, without further ado.

"You would speak with me, señor?"

"My mission," I replied, "is with the commander of this ship. If you are he, you will go with me yonder."

"The commander of the *San Cristobal* is dead. I am Don Diego de Baçan. But I will go aboard no heretic pirato."

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"We are no pirato, señor," said I calmly, "but a free sailer of Her Majesty, Elizabeth of England,

whom you have attacked without warrant.”

“And if I will not go?” Here he drew himself up to his great height, folded his arms and frowned at me defiantly, while a dozen or so of his pikemen stood at his back and scowled fiercely. But, in my position, black looks caused no tremors.

“If you will not come,” I answered steadily, “my orders are to bring you,—this I will do; failing to return before the next stroke of the bell, my captain will sink you as he would a rotten pinnacle.”

He looked about him at the scene of havoc, and smiled bitterly. Then, with a word to his pikemen, who still surrounded us, his manner changed.

“Señor,” he said more quietly, “you see how it is with us. The *Cristobal* takes water at every surge. She is a wreck. What am I to do? To continue the battle were only to sacrifice the remainder of my company. I must surrender.” He cast down his eyes. “Yes, there is no help for it. I will go with you. But if, señor,” and here he raised his head and eyed me like a hawk from cap to boot, “if you deem your victory one of personal prowess and have the humor for further argument, I shall meet your pleasure.” His words came calmly, yet he leaned forward and seemed about to raise his hands toward me. I folded my arms and looked him in the eyes. They had lost their quiet and flashed at me furiously. His great fingers twitched nervously as though to catch me at the throat. He was glorious. And then I made a vow that, so far as it lay in my power when time and place fitted, his taunt should have an issue.

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“Why, that will be as it may be,” I replied evenly, “at present you are to follow me aboard my ship.” Seeing my attitude, he grew calmer and shrugging his shoulders, turned away.

“As you will;” and then after a pause, half courteously, “You will permit me to give some final orders?”

“Orders in future must come from my captain.”

“But, señor,” he cried, “these are but some matters relating to the repair of the ship.”

Seeing no harm in this, I allowed him to turn and speak in a low tone to one of his pikemen, whereupon the fellow went below.

The *Griffin* had meanwhile hauled up within speaking distance and, mounting the after-castle, I hailed Captain Hooper, acquainting him with the condition of affairs aboard the *Cristobal*. The weather being still too rough to heave the *Griffin* alongside, I obtained further instructions to bring the Spanish officer aboard that the disposition of the prisoners and other matters might be more readily discussed and considered.

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So ill-governed was the crew that as we got down into the boat the pikemen and gunners leaned far over the bulwarks, cursing us for dogs of heretics, and one of them spat in the face of a sailor named Salvation Smith, who would have killed him with a boatpike had not the coxswain, Job Goddard, stayed his hand. The wind now blew less vigorously and, though the sea still ran high, there seemed less danger than on the outward passage. But, as we rounded out from under the lee of the Spaniard, my fine fellows setting their broad backs to the stroke, there came from one of the gallery ports a cry of distress, the voice of a woman,

“[A moi! a moi!](#) For God’s sake, help!”



"A moi! A moi!"

The oars hung for a moment in the air as though the sound of those English words had stricken the boatmen motionless. Then as I half rose from the thwart, with one accord the starboard oars gave a mighty stroke and the bow of the boat swung over under the many-galleried stern of the *Cristobal*. A glance at the port showed a face and the flutter of a kerchief, while from within came the clashing of metal and the curses of men. As we swung in, a piece of wreckage and tackling hung near us and when our stern rose on the crest of the wave, I could reach it, and hauled myself clear of the boat and up to the projection of the lowermost gallery. As I raised myself I saw two boats drop from the side of the *Griffin* and knew I should not long be without aid. On reaching the port the sound of the conflict became more distinct and I heard the hard breathing of the disputants; so without more ado, I raised myself over the sill with an effort and clambered in.

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Before the door leading to the passage of the half-deck a tall, slim figure in sombre garb moved from side to side, making so excellent a play with his sword, that the pikemen who were thrusting at him furiously from the narrow corridor had small advantage. A woman lay upon the floor and another crouched in the corner. On seeing me come forward one of the pikemen fell back, but the other aimed so vicious a blow at the swordsman that, had he not been thrown aside, it must surely have ended him. The force of the thrust threw the villain forward into the cabin, where, being off his guard by reason of his pike handle fouling the doorjamb, he came within reach of my hand, which struck him full in the mouth, laying him sprawling over a sea chest. Salvation Smith, singing a psalm, and Job Goddard, swearing loudly, here tumbled in at the port and following into the passage laid about them lustily with their weapons, to the end that in a few seconds the place was cleared and the outer door made fast. To our great amazement no further attempt was made upon the door, nor indeed was there any commotion above us or on the deck; but upon returning to the port the reason of this was clear, for the four boats of the *Griffin* were sweeping around the stern, the fellows lying to their oars with vigor and the pikemen standing upright, their jaws set and the glitter of battle in their eyes. Over the *Cristobal* they came swarming, driving the men forward where they huddled upon the fore-castle like a slave cargo. They had no spirit, for not a shot or an arrow was fired, and Master Hooper found himself in undisputed possession of the prize.

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Having now no further alarm for the outcome of the affair, I directed the door to be unfastened and turned my attention to those within the cabin.

I have never made boast of courtly ways, thinking them mere glitterings and fripperies of the idle, designed to hide a lack of sturdier qualities. Few women had I known, and in my boisterous life no need had come for handsome phrases, yet would I have given whatever interest I possessed or might come to possess in this or other prizes, for the readiness of wit to clothe my rough speech in more courtly apparel. There was a quality of nobility and grace in the figure of the maid in the cabin that cast my rugged notions to the winds and made me seem the swash-buckler that I was. In stature she was tall and carried herself with the pride and dignity that are ever the birthright of true nobility. No exact description can I put down of the appearance and demeanor of Mademoiselle Diane de la Notte; for not poetry but only dull prose can run from my

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unmannerly quill. I only know that a radiance was shed upon me, and all the senses save that one which controlled my heart were blinded and inert. So acute indeed was this feeling of my moral littleness that I did naught but stand shifting from one foot to the other, toying in silly fashion with the hilt of my sword. Had it not been for the maid herself I know not what uncomely thing I might have done. But Madame, who had lain swooning on the floor, now recovering consciousness and thus removing her anxiety Mademoiselle raised her head and spoke to me.

"Monsieur, we do not know what is your calling or command—whether adventurer or Queen's officer—but you are a valiant man," saying other things I so little deserved that I cast down my eyes and replied in some embarrassment that my men, not I, deserved her kindness—God knows what we had done was little enough and easy of accomplishment.

But she would not have it so, adding further, "The La Nottes are not ungrateful and their blessings will fall forever on you, sir. It may happen that your service may one day have its reward. But now,"—and a deep sigh burst from her, "alas! we can do nothing, not even for ourselves—nothing!" It seemed as though her voice were about to break, but bending quickly forward she applied herself anew to Madame lying at her knee, the picture of feminine strength even in despair. I was so affected by her anguish that I could find no words to say to her, and while I still wondered who could seek to do them injury, I moved to the Sieur de la Notte, who sat upon a chest staunching the blood which flowed freely from a pike wound in his wrist. He was much exhausted by his encounter, so I aided him to bind his arm, after which I withdrew and went upon the deck to make my report to Master Hooper.

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CHAPTER III. MADEMOISELLE.

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After awhile the Sieur de la Notte came on deck to Master Hooper and disclosed the story of his persecution and the circumstances which led to his capture and imprisonment. His tale was, in short, the tale of a hundred others. He had become a follower of Calvin and had even preached and written the new religion. His estates were soon confiscated and he was forced to flee into the night with his wife and daughter, carrying only the jewels and valuables to which he could lay his hands.

"And what, Monsieur," asked Master Hooper, when he had done, "of your adventure in the cabin?"

"That is soon told. When the action began, the commander of the *Cristobal*, Don Alvarez, sent us below, cautioning us not to appear upon the deck. Don Diego de Baçan himself locked us in the after cabin. The battle over there came a sudden movement at the outer door and two pikemen rushed into the corridor and set upon me vigorously. So sudden was the onslaught I had scarce time to set myself on guard. But I managed to draw and use my sword to such good end as to confine the fellows in the narrow passageway, where I had them at a disadvantage. Yet, what might have come of us had not yonder giant interposed——"

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"But the cause of this attack?" asked Captain Hooper.

"You must know, Monsieur," replied the Frenchman, "that under the deck of that cabin is a chest containing many thousand crowns. It was upon the Huguenot ship from which we were taken and was intended by Admiral Coligny for certain troops under arms in the north." Captain Hooper's eyes sparkled. He would have liked to take that chest upon the *Griffin*. But he had his orders and dared not without the consent of the Queen take even salvage of treasure or property belonging to the Protestant party.

"Captain Hooper," said I, "the orders for the murder of this gentleman came from the officer, Don Diego de Baçan." And I related my own imprudence in allowing the Spaniard to communicate with his bowmen.

"H'm! 'Twas a foolish thing," said Master Hooper, stroking his chin, "but, lad, you've atoned for your fault in handsome fashion. And now out with spare yards and masts and try for some steege way on this storied hayrick."

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There being many bad injuries, the *Cristobal* took water rapidly and Master Hooper sent all of her crew to removing it. The men mounted stages set at places beyond the reach of the water and made such repairs as would enable her to reach port, provided the weather grew no worse. The injuries below water were stopped from inboard, the wreck was partially cleared, jury masts and temporary spars were rigged in place of those shot away, and, with a wind on the quarter, the *Griffin* and her prize moved to the eastward toward the coast of France. The *Griffin* having even more than her complement of men, it was thought best by Captain Hooper to send aboard the *Cristobal* a large prize crew, of which he made me commander. Many of the more important prisoners were put aboard the *Griffin* or taken below on the *Cristobal*, where they were confined in the fore-castle. To my great satisfaction the family of the Vicomte de la Notte were passengers to the city of Dieppe, where they had friends. A matter much less to my liking was the company of Don Diego de Baçan, whose presence even in confinement seemed to me a menace to the safety of the ship and her precious cargo. But it was so ordered by Captain Hooper, for at Dieppe the Spaniard might be exchanged for English seamen imprisoned there as hostages at the

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demands of Spain. The *Cristobal* as a prize was to be made over formally to certain agents of Captain Hooper. These agents, who were French, it is said were in the employ of the Queen, but I doubted this after my dealings with them. Having sold the *Cristobal* and placed the recaptured treasure in the hands of Admiral Coligny, I was to rejoin the *Griffin* at Portsmouth.

On the afternoon of the second day the *Griffin* put her helm up and set a straight course for the coast of Ireland, to refit at Kinsale, where Master Hooper kept his goods and stores. All effort having been made to insure a safe voyage I stood at the weather rigging upon the quarter-deck, thinking of many things. I marveled at the wonderful power which had drawn me from myself and made my rough hulk seem to me but the abode of a carnal spirit. Having no quarrel with the world except in matters relating to the betterment of my condition, I had grown in my rugged health and brute strength further and further from the more delicate sensibilities which go to make the better part of human life. It was my own fault. I knew that. I could have gone into the horse-company of my uncle with a chance for preferment and a life of polite groveling at the skirts of royalty. Though I had read much of such books as were to be found in my way and picked up a smattering of the languages, a dozen years of service in all weathers and companies had cudged from me many feelings of the gentler kind which I believe are nature's gifts to all right-thinking gentlefolk.

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But I had chosen my life for myself and there was an end of it. I compared myself, beside Mademoiselle, to a clumsy rock crumster against the gilded pinnacle of the Queen where every line is beauty and strength. I watched her as she walked the deck with Madame. Although the *Cristobal* lay over to leeward and blundered heavily through the seas, raising her head and stern in abrupt fashion, Mademoiselle walked the slanting deck straightly, conversing quietly the while and cheering Madame, who leaned upon her. Her carriage, though lissome, gained from the set of the head a certain dignity and grace that marked her as a queen among women—perhaps a little haughty but in it the more queenly. But I would not be so interpreted as to show her in any sense cold of temper, for as I stood there watching her, my heart in my eyes, from time to time she turned and flashed a warm glance upon me, which sealed each time more surely my destiny as her willing servitor.

In a little while the prisoners were brought up from below for their airing and Mademoiselle went with Madame below to the cabin. The Spaniards, taken altogether, were a well enough looking company, and I do not doubt that under proper authority and better conditions of ordnance and seamanship, could have given a good account of themselves. As it was, they seemed well cowed and came up from their quarters sheepishly, blinking their eyes like so many cats at the brightness of the sun. There came also among the last Don Diego de Baçan. Lifting his great bulk over the combing of the hatchway he scanned the horizon as though mechanically and, seeing nothing, turned toward me. I had not given much of my thought to this fellow, for with the many necessary orders and duties in getting the *Cristobal* to rights and under way my mind had been so occupied as to harbor no place for plans or business of my own. Yet the memory of the haughty taunt of the Spaniard rankled in me, and I promised myself an ungodly pleasure in a further discussion of the subject. As the ranking officer among the prisoners, I had allotted him the half of my cabin, but my business upon the deck having been so urgent, I had not as yet had any talk with him.

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The mist of years passes over our eyes and brains, dimming the memories of youthful impulses and madneses. Yet even now, as I recall the face of De Baçan, handsome, sneering, powerful,—his look of contempt at all things,—my pulses beat the more quickly and my hand again goes to the place where my sword was wont to hang. It is said that in the matter of love and the taking in marriage, each person may find upon the earth a mate; likewise it seems to me most natural that for each man upon the earth at least one other may be born who shall be his natural adversary and enemy. It was once told me by Martin Cockrem that two churls entered the inn-yard at the Pelican and without exchange of words, or laying eyes on each other ever before, fell instantly to fighting. Setting aside the danger which lay in his presence and the grievance I bore him for his attack upon the Sieur de la Notte, a like feeling of antipathy there was between the Spaniard and me. And as he came forward, my fingers closed so that the nails drove into the flesh and I took a step toward him. Yet he was a prisoner of war, promised to be safely delivered. So, half ashamed of my own impatience, I bit my lip for the better control of my speech and leaned back upon the taffrail smiling.

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"You have not given me the honor of your company in my prison," said he, with a sneer.

"Nay, señor," I returned, "the *Cristobal* is a sieve, and but for certain precautions might now be floating keelson upward. My company you shall have when other things are righted, for there is a small matter for discussion."

"And what, Señor Pirato?" he asked with a lift of the chin. "What matter is common between you and me?"

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"Permit me to be the judge of that, señor. And upon the *Cristobal* the subject may be settled."

"Oho! You crow loud as a fledgling cock with your weighty subjects!"

"My weighty subjects are less weighty than my fists," I replied, for I liked him not, striving hard meanwhile to preserve my peace. "You saw fit to put an insult upon me and did me the honor of an offer of a further argument of the question. I accept that offer."

He placed his hands upon his hips and looked at me from head to foot as at a person he had never seen before. And then his white teeth gleamed through his black mustache as he smiled.

"You are a bold stripling. Why, Sir Swashbuckler, the prowess of Don de Baçan is a byword in the navy of King Philip, and no man in all Spain has bested him in any bout of strength. Yet, look you, I like your bulk and manner and it may be that I shall see fit to honor you with a test of endurance."

"'Tis no honor that I seek, señor," said I, giving him smile for smile, "but the satisfaction of a small personal grievance which may be righted quickly. And though your bulk is fit enough for my metal, your manner pleases me not;" for it galled me that he should continue to speak of me as a pirato upon my own command; and my blood boiled at the thought of what he had attempted to work upon the Sieur de la Notte and Mademoiselle. [37]

"My thews may please you even less, Sir Adventurer. Mark you this,"—and leaning over, he took from one of the guns a chocking quoin of hickory-wood banded with copper. Seizing it in his hands he placed it between his knees for a better purchase and, bending forward quickly, with a mighty wrench, he split it in two parts as one would split an apple; whereat I was greatly surprised, and knew for certain that I had no ordinary giant to deal with. But I held and still hold, that like most of such feats, it was but a trick and come of long practise. I might have shown him, had I wished, the breaking of a pike-staff with a hand-width grasp; for in this there is no great skill but only honest elbow sinew. Yet I had no humor to put him on his guard against me.

Some of my surprise may have noted itself in my face, for he laughed boastfully as he threw the quoin upon the deck. "So will I split you,—if your humor is unchanged."

I laughed back in his face.

"If your quoins are as rotten as your ship, I fear you not. To-morrow we make the coast. To-night, if it meets your convenience we will meet upon the fore-castle."

"As you will," he said with a shrug of his shoulders, "yet I have warned you. And if blood be spilled by accident——" [38]

"It will not be mine! Until then, señor," and bowing, I made my way below to inquire if Mademoiselle wished for anything.

CHAPTER IV.

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OF MY BOUT WITH DE BAÇAN.

I met her coming out of the passageway which led to the after-cabin. Holding out her hand to me, she said frankly, "I came to seek you, Master Killigrew." Her manner was one of friendliness and trust, and so filled my heart with gratitude that at first I did not note the anxiety which showed in her eyes. We moved to an embrasure by one of the casements. There she seated herself upon a gun-carriage and motioned me to a place at her side.

"God knows, Master Killigrew, that we are deep in your debt," she began. "You are the only one my father has trusted since we fled from Villeneuve. But there is much that you should know."

"Mademoiselle," I replied, "my devotion to your interests or cause——"

There may have been more of ardor in my tones than I meant to show, for I fancied a pink, rosy color came to her neck and cheeks.

"We have good reason to believe in your honesty of purpose, Master Killigrew," she said hastily, "and my present talk is further proof of confidence. The matter concerns Don Diego de Baçan and ourselves. This Spaniard has no good will for my father." [40]

"But, Mademoiselle, has he——?"

"You and your captain thought that the reason for the attack lay in his hope to conceal the money in the cabin. That was not all. When we were first taken aboard the *Cristobal* he gave me the honor of his admiration. The following day he sought me on many pretexts. I,—believing that the comfort and peace of Madame, my mother, depended upon diplomacy,—allowed him to sit and talk with me. At last, his speech becoming little to my liking, I refused him further admittance and told the Sieur de la Notte of my annoyance."

I rose from the seat.

"No, listen! Listen to me," she continued. "Then—'twas only three days before the encounter with the *Great Griffin*—my father sought Don Alvarez and told him the facts as I relate them, demanding the courtesies due to honorable prisoners of war. This request was disregarded and Don Diego came at all hours to our cabin, into which, the door lock having been removed, he entered at whatever hour he pleased."

She may have marked my manner, which as the narrative proceeded, grew from joy at her confidence to surprise, anger and then rage at the Spaniard, which as I sat there seemed like to overmaster me. I could say no word, but for better control kept my eyes fixed upon the deck. There was much, I knew, beneath that story which she had sweetly robbed of its harshness to guard me from rash impulse. And so I sat there, transfixed. [41]

"I have told this because I think it best to guard against him when we reach the coast. De Baçan has sworn that he will possess me. I know there is naught he will not attempt to keep his

word. There is no evil he would not work upon us or upon you to gain his ends. For myself I fear nothing, but he hates my father with a deadly hatred and Madame must be saved from further suffering if the means lie in our power. Oh! what would I not give for the bones and sinews of a man like you who has but to order and the thing is done!"

She stopped abruptly and cast down her eyes as though the manner of her speech had been too strong and unwomanly. And I, who sat there, turned from cold with hatred of the Spaniard, to warm with love of her. For in spite of the distance between us, the speech came impulsively from the heart and made me more than ever desire to justify her confidence.

"I cannot say, Mademoiselle," I replied gravely, "that there will not be danger, for there is treachery in Dieppe. But many strong hearts stand between you and this De Baçan."

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Her hand lay upon the breeching of the gun beside us; small and very white it was, ornamented with a ring of ancient setting and workmanship. Without meditation and eased of my boorishness by some subtle influence that drew me to her, I took it in my fingers and raised it to my lips. Then, astonished at my audacity—for I had never done so strange a thing, I drew back, hot and awkward. But at once she set me at my ease and would not have it so.

"Nay, sir," she said warmly, "if you are to serve us truly I would not have a better seal for the contract."

Upon which, still in great ferment of mind, I straightway made the compact doubly sure.

She then left me, seeking the cabin, while I went upon the deck, intent upon settling the business in hand.

The wind now blew freshly from the north and the spray came over the waist, cutting sharply against my face as I went forward. Job Goddard lay upon his back upon the tarpaulin of the forward hatchway, while Salvation Smith read aloud portions of a book of tales relating to the lives of the Christian martyrs. At times, in impressive pauses in the reading by the pious one, Goddard would raise himself upon one elbow and curse lustily—his usual mode of expressing admiration for the martyrs and their sponsor; for in Salvation lay the makings of a most bigoted and godly reformer. Job Goddard swore by all things under heaven and upon all occasions—when that mode of speech seemed least fitting or appropriate; and the book of the martyrs was but a part of Salvation's instruction in simple and pious thought. Yet they were both goodly fighters—in a place of great difficulty being worth at the least four Englishmen, six Spaniards or eight Frenchmen. The very sound of the clashing of steel pike-heads or the report of an arquebuse set them upon the very edge of their mettle, and so the prospect of a fair engagement caused them so great a joy that even devotion to their principles came to be forgotten. I therefore knew that the business I had in hand would meet with ready response.

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"To-night," said I, without further ado, "there is to be a bout." Smith closed the "Martyrs" with celerity and Goddard began to swear.

"Glory be, Job! Who, Master Killigrew?"

"Odds 'oonds, Jem! What is it, sir?"

"There is to be a test between the Spaniard, De Baçan and myself."

In a moment they were all excitement, slapping each other upon the back and making a great commotion. When they were quiet again I gave them their instructions. There were to be no arms. For could I not crush him into submission with my own will and sinews, then—well—I had met my match or better. But I did not think of that. We would fight at twelve o'clock upon the fore-castle, for there we would be undisturbed. Two Spanish prisoners of De Baçan's choice were to stand by him, and Goddard and Salvation Smith were to stand by me to see justice done. The details being agreed upon I despatched a message by Goddard to the Spaniard acquainting him with the plans; to which there being no reply, I deemed them satisfactory.

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The night came up dark and windy. But toward six bells the fresh breeze piled the clouds away to the west and the moon came out, lighting up the deck and glimmering upon the bright work of the lanterns. Prompt upon the stroke of eight bells I caused word to be sent to De Baçan. When he appeared, his cloak was thrown about his shoulders but I could see he wore no doublet, having only his shirt, hose, and a pair of short boots. It pleased me to know he had thought proper to make some preparation for the work, for I now felt that the matter was not altogether indifferent to him, and that, in the quieter moments of his cabin, he had given me credit for some hardihood.

Now as I measured him by my own stature it seemed indeed as though he had the advantage in height, though I much doubt if he had really my breadth of shoulder or my length of arm, which were second to no man I had met. But the symmetry and grace of his figure were perfect. The light shone through the thin shirt and I marked the great muscles behind the shoulders as they played when he moved his arms. The collar was open and I could note the swell of the breast muscles as they lay in layers like rows of cordage from breastbone to arm-pit. The thighs were smaller than mine, but there was more of grace and more of sinew both there and at the calf, the ball of which played just at the boot top. His eye was bold and clear and he looked at me steadily from the moment he came upon the deck, seeking, in a way I had seen practised, to create a feeling of uneasiness and uncertainty. This look of his eyes I took to be but a part of the method of intimidation he had worked upon others, and it only served to make me more wary of the tricks I knew he would play should sheer strength not suffice.

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He at once made several tries upon my arm which I held forward to ward a sudden rush below

the guard. Knowing that my youth and clean living might give me advantage in a long struggle, I was content for the moment to stand upon guard and suffered him to play around me, my eyes fixed upon his, every look of which I followed and read. For so heavy a man, he stepped with wonderful alacrity and sprang from this side to that with such speed that he puzzled me. Finding, however, by reason of my length of reach that he could get no hold, he began trying different methods. The extension guard has been thought of some advantage and the German, Brandt, has practised it with success, yet I counted not upon the wonderful quickness of the man. By feinting for finding a catch upon my shoulder, he sprang in, catching me handily with a gripe of his left arm upon my neck and back. So fiercely he came that my right arm was pinioned; yet my left elbow met him in the middle of the breast below the bone, and I stood firm upon my legs, which were more stocky of build than his, and met the assault strongly.

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As he closed in, the arm upon my back and neck took a firmer hold and the hand came over my right shoulder from the back, seeking a purchase at the neck. The strain he put upon my body was terrible, so terrible that for the moment all the breath seemed like to be squeezed from out my lungs. Backward we strained a foot or so, when, as he eased his gripe to get a better purchase upon the back, my right arm came a trifle freer and I found a use for my hand which now got a hold upon his shoulder muscles. My nails bit deep into the flesh and I plucked between my palm and fingers a great muscle out of tension, and felt for the moment I could hold my own. He still had an advantage of me in the gripe; and though the pressure upon my body was not so great as at the beginning, my breath came with difficulty. He seemed in little better condition, for he breathed hard, and I knew the chance blow of the elbow in the breast had robbed him of some of his staying power. Try as he might, his arms about me, his head bent forward upon my chest, he could not at first bend my neck. Backward and forward we moved, each of us bringing forth all the strength we could, neither of us able to gain. Then, the strain put upon me being more than mortal flesh could stand, little by little I went back until I came down upon one knee.

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The agony of that moment! He put forth all his power and tried to break my back with a terrific wrench which must have ended me had not my new position given a side purchase upon him. Seeing that so long as my right hand shoulder gripe remained he could not get the full play of strength in his left arm, he bore down with his entire weight. In this I humored him till he got me high enough when, though still suffering grievously, I shifted my gripe and took him with both arms, one up one down, just below his ribs. Swinging half to the right and using all the power left me, I half arose and buttocked him fairly, sending him in a great half circle and loosing his gripe upon my chest. Yet the strain he had put upon me had weakened me so sorely that, ere I could come upon him to follow up my sudden advantage, he had broken loose and gained his feet for a further trial.

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"Body o' me, lad, 'twas handily done," came from Goddard in an awed whisper; I marked a reverential "Heart o' grace," from Smith at my back, "now look out for him, sir!"

Indeed the face of the Spaniard was dreadful to see. He stood for the moment, his legs apart, staggering from the shock of the fall. His breath came hard and his eyes gleamed wickedly. At me he came and with a desperateness I might not mistake. As we sprang into each other's grasp, there followed a test of endurance such as I had never before been put to—nor will again. In turn he tried the cross buttock, the back hank and back heel, but I managed to meet him at all points, though in sore straits for lack of wind. I had ten years advantage in the matter of age, and the life he had led had doubtless sapped his vigor. For as we struggled back and forth I noticed that his gripe had lost a part of its power and his offensive play was weaker. It seemed as though he lay upon his oars awaiting the chance for a trick. By and by he used it.

His left hand became disengaged and the great wiry fingers fastened a fierce clutch upon my throat, which I could not free. He had me from the left side and I could not well return his dastardly compliment. But as I felt my power a-going, by loosing the clasp of my left arm, I seized him from behind, my right hand going around his neck and my fingers getting a fair good hold in his beard just below the turn of the chin. Here I had the advantage. For he had taken me low down on the neck where the stronger muscles are and feared to loose his gripe; while my clasp tightened till I felt my thumb and fingers meet on the nether side of the windpipe. So great a rage I had at his taking me foully that I knew not what I did and as we fell I brought all my strength into play. Though he fell on top of me and my breath was gone, I knew that not death itself could have loosed the clutch I put upon him. I saw as through a mist the mouth open and shut hideously, the eyes, wide with terror, come from their sockets and the skin turn black almost as the beard that half hid it. The hand upon my neck lost its sinew, the muscles of the arm relaxed and the Spaniard dropped over to one side nerveless and powerless though still struggling against me. The fury did not die out of me at once and it seemed as though my fingers only gripped him the harder. Then, I know not what,—perhaps some weak and womanish pity at his strait,—caused me to loose my hold upon the throat, which I might have torn out from his body as one would unstrand a hempen cable.

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God knows why I did this thing! Perhaps it was destiny that I should have spared him. In the light of after events, it seems as though some stronger hand than mine had set for us the life that followed. Had I killed him this account would never have been written, nor would I have gained the further friendship of Mademoiselle.

[50]

But I would set all sail ere my anchor is well clear. By all the rules of the game the Spaniard had given me the right to his life. Would to God I had taken it, even as he lay there prone and helpless. As it was I stumbled to my feet and with Goddard and Smith, stood waiting for De Baçan to rise. At first I had not noted the disappearance of his seconds, for the terrible earnestness of the bout had blinded me to all but the matter in hand.

In answer to my question Job Goddard said,

“Odds me! It was about the buttock, sir, which he said was done different in Spain. Mebbe I was over-rapid in demonstratin’ my meanin’ an’ view of the question. But I did him no hurt, sir,—curse me if I did!”

The other man sat terrified in the shadow of the foremast, but upon my suggestion he went to De Baçan, aiding him to arise and go to the cabin below.

CHAPTER V.

DIEPPE.

The following day we passed up to the city of Dieppe, and came to anchor in the river of Arques without further mishap. I had seen nothing of the Spaniard since the night before. I could not wonder that he had not chosen to show himself upon the deck; if it were true that he had bested all contestants at feats of strength, then surely his defeat must have rankled in him. He had probably no more desire to see me than I had to see him; but there was business to be done in the city which concerned him and his exchange for the English hostages.

My arms and back were so sore with the straining he had given me that it cost many an ache to bend over into the hatchway. I felt in worse plight than he, for further than showing a cloth about his neck and a certain huskiness in the voice he gave no sign of rough handling. He made no move to arise from his stool as I entered the cabin. He turned his eyes in my direction, looking sullen and angry as any great bull. But it was not the imperious look he bore after the sea battle; it was rather the eye-challenge of one man for another of equal station. I marked with pleasure how his eye traveled over me, and could barely suppress a smile. I had no mind to bring about further trouble, but in spite of good intention he took the visit ill; the malice he bore me and the hatred I bore him so filled his spirit and mine that there was no place in either for admiration of the prowess of the other.

“So, sir,” said he, “you must seek to humiliate me further.”

“I make offense to no man, save that of his own choosing,” I replied. “I come upon the matter of your exchange and liberation. In a short time I go ashore to settle the terms of your release; so we shall be quits. To-night you may go as you will without hindrance from my people.”

“I shall not leave you sadly, Sir Englishman,” growled he. “But mark you this,—I am no weakling enemy. You have bested me fairly, but for it all I like you not. I hate you for your handsome face, your sneaking air and your saintly mien. There has been an account opened that cannot be closed until one of us is dead. I will not die yet. One day you shall fawn at my feet for mercy until the fetters gnaw deep into your hide or the fire eats out your heretic heart!”

They were ill-omened threats. His manner was in no way to be mistaken and I was in no humor to be crossed by such as he. But seeing no good to come of further conversation I turned upon my heel and walked to the companion-way.

“I warn you now,” he went on as I paused at the foot of the hatch, “nothing in France can save the *Sieur de la Notte*—nothing—not even in Dieppe. I will seek you fair and I will seek you foul; I will take you fair if fairness offers; but, fair or foul, I will meet you when the advantage will not be upon your side—and so, good-by,—Sir Pirato!” I heard him laughing hoarsely as I walked up the gangway. Surely he was not a pleasant person.

By six o’clock in the evening my arrangements with Captain Hooper’s agent were made. In the settlement the Spanish prisoners were to be exchanged for certain Englishmen and Frenchmen, in all thirty in number. A purchaser found, the *San Cristobal* was to be sold forthwith, her equivalent in gold being transferred to me for Captain Hooper at Portsmouth. It gave me great disappointment that there was no authorized agent of Admiral Coligny in the town, to whom I could turn over in bulk the money in the closet in the cabin. The condition of affairs being so uncertain and men so little to be trusted, there seemed no other way but to carry this money to Coligny myself. Accordingly I also made arrangements through the agent to have this great treasure converted into jewels that I might convey it the more easily. My own seamen, save Goddard and Salvation Smith whom I retained, were to be set upon a ship sailing for Portsmouth in a few days. The *Sieur de la Notte* and his family were safely removed to rooms in the house of a Huguenot, who could be trusted to keep counsel; for in Dieppe, though the followers of Calvin had assembled in great numbers, there was even now danger for noble fugitives. In the present condition of matters of state, the Admiral, whose watchful eye seemed to reach all France, might do nothing except by subterfuge for his people; and there were many at court who bore *La Notte* so fierce a hatred that the aid of Coligny was now impossible. The house in which the unfortunate nobleman was quartered lay in the *Rue Etienne* under the shadow of the new church of *Saint Remi*. The city, topped by the frowning hill and battlements of the great *Château*, lay thickly to the left; and down several turnings to the right through the marts of the city was the quay where the tall ships of the house of *Parmentier* had for two generations brought in, each twelvemonth, the richest products of the East.

Thither, on the following evening, after my visit to the shipping agent, I directed my steps. Although I had a great treasure about me in jewels and money, I was at a loss for a safer place

and felt that I might rest secure there until the morrow, when a Protestant vessel would be sailing for the Seine. I was going to leave Mademoiselle and my heart was heavy. Diego de Baçan was loose in Dieppe, and though at a disadvantage, I did not doubt he would waste no time in learning the whereabouts of every sympathizer in the town. Aye, and every bravo of his creed who could be hired to do his dirty work. As a matter of precaution there came with me Job Goddard and Salvation Smith who swung gleefully up from the counting-house and landing place, buffeting aside the staid townsmen and the seamen who were setting the supplies upon the vessels of the fleet of Jean Ribault which were to sail in a few days to establish the colony in America.

Goddard and Smith I sent into a tavern near by the abode of the Sieur de la Notte with instructions to engage no one in conversation and to await my coming. With the strongest admonitions to secrecy, I had told them of the jewels about me, of my plans and of my suspicions; for I wished, if anything happened to me, that the Sieur de la Notte should be informed. I knew these seamen devoted to my interests; and the desire to aid me, I fancied, had found no cause for abatement since the struggle of the evening before with the Spaniard. [56]

Of the things which happened in the cabaret and of which I am about to tell, I afterward learned from Goddard himself, whose resolution was a thing of paper or of iron as he was in or out of his cups. He differed from Salvation Smith, for there was no hour, drunk or sober, in which that stalwart Christian would not vigorously assail the strongholds of the devil. There seemed to be no tenet of the New Religion which he had not at his tongue's obedience; and when he and Goddard were drunk together, the exhortations of Salvation would reach a degree of frenzy which for the time silenced even the profanity of his companion. Quiet of common, his talk would then become louder and more forward until there was at last no opportunity for talk from others. And as his speech grew louder, that of Goddard, the blasphemer, would become more subdued, until, for a time perhaps, but few words—none of them of saintly origin—came from his lips. The torrent of the discourse of Smith, halted for a moment, gained by delay a stronger flow and burst forth the more sturdily, until burnt up at last in the flame of its own enthusiasm. Yet Job Goddard would not be denied for long, and so ingenious were his powers that his mutterings would at last resolve themselves into combinations of words so new and surprising that Salvation Smith even was soon agape with something very near to admiration. [57]

Much of this must have happened after I left them. In the hostel was a crowd of seamen and broken down gentlemen. The swords of these cavaliers were their only fortune, and they were about to sail on the voyage with the Huguenot Ribault to Florida. Many of them, as will be seen, I came to know and so learned from them also of the things set forth hereafter. They were for the most part of a religious inclination, though not a few had no more religion in their hearts than Goddard. They were all reckless, and in one last drinking bout were taking leave of home and France. The alicant had passed but half a dozen times and Goddard had sat patiently through a discourse from his companion upon the lives of the martyrs until his flesh and blood could stand it no longer. He lifted his pot and in a tone of lusty confidence which might easily have been heard from one end of the room to the other said, grinning broadly,

"Bad eatin' and drinkin' to the Spanish, Jem Smith! Uneasy sleepin' and wakin' for King Philip! A cross-buttock and a broken head for Dyago! And a good fight at the last for our pains! Drain it, lad,—you'll never have a better."

"Amen!" said Salvation, piously. "And thanks for the victory of the *Griffin*, Job Goddard. There was never surer mark of His handiwork than yonder cruise when the righteous were uplifted and confusion came to the enemies of His Gospels." [58]

"Amen again," said Goddard, "and be damned to them!" He rose to his feet and looking around him clattered his pot loudly against the table.

"Look ye, lads, an ye like not barleycorn, a pot of sack against the chill of the night! An' if ye cannot drink in English, I'll warrant your French throats no less slippery from frog eatin'."

"Morbleu, non," said one, "I am as dry as the main yard of the *Trinity*."

"To the *Great Griffin*, then," said Goddard loudly, "an' the good crowns the *San Cristobal* sells for, with some for Bess and some for we! Look you! See how they glitter—less bright for the black head on 'em, but welcome enough in the taproom—where with a whole heart we can drink confusion to the Spanish king and every other sneaking cat of a—"

"Sh—" said Smith in a low voice. He had just reason enough to know that they were disobeying orders. "For the love o' God stow your gaff, lad, there are like as not some of the thumb-screwing whelps even here." But the crowd of seamen were amused at the Englishman and would not be denied. They set their flagons down with a clatter to hear Job Goddard, with the help of one of their number, in a bluff, hearty way tell of the taking of the *San Cristobal*. The story was strangely interlarded with oaths and devout expressions, half French, half English, but all bearing the mark of approval among the Huguenot company, who did me the honor to rattle their pots again right merrily at the account of my wrestling bout with the Spaniard. [59]

Salvation Smith, enjoying in his own way the importance of his friend and ally, who for once had drowned out his own eloquence, cast aside all caution and sought to enhance the effect of Job's remarks by frequent and timely expressions of approval. He walked about, smiling broadly, causing the pots to be filled as often as they fell half empty.

So intent was the crowd upon the performance of the seaman Goddard and so wrapped up in their drinking bouts that they failed to notice three men who sat at a corner table sipping at their

liquor. All three listened intently to Goddard's tale and once or twice looks of surprise passed between them. As it went on they lifted their pots to hide their lips and leaned well forward, whispering together, then listening to catch the words of the seaman, as his tongue, unloosed, swung merrily in the wind of anecdote.

After a while when he paused for a moment there was a commotion in another part of the room. A slender spark of the company of Ribault, with a well-worn doublet, but wearing a silver earring, a nicely trimmed beard and other marks of gentle taste, was hoisted upon his legs and sang unsteadily a verse which in English goes somewhat like this:—

[60]

“Here's to every merry lass—
Here's to her who's shy, sirs,—
Here's an overflowing glass
To any roguish eye, sirs;
Be she sweet or be she scold,
Be her temper warm or cold,
Be she tall or be she small,
Naught can we but love her.
A-dieu—a-dieu—
A-dieu, belle Marie-e!

Be she stout or be she lean—
Be she pauper, be she queen—
Be she fine or be she jade—
Be she wife or be she maid—
Here's a toast to woman;
Here's a health to woman!
A-dieu—A-dieu—
Adieu, belle Marie-e!”

The last two lines he sang in a melancholy drawl, holding his pot up and looking at it with one eye shut. This caused much applause and loud clapping. To this he tried to respond with more spirit, with a song and chorus which they afterwards sang frequently upon the ships. It was very fine and had a martial ring.

“I drink my wine
While others pine,
And toast a lady fair—

[61]

Chorus: And toast a lady fair!

And to the eyes
Of her I prize,
In Catharine's vintage rare—

Chorus: In Catharine's vintage rare!

I draw my steel
For woe or weal
With foemen of my mettle—

Chorus: With foemen of my mettle!

And teach the wight
Who fears to fight
To keep his blade in fettle

Chorus: To keep his blade in fettle!”

When the refrain had died away and the Frenchman had dropped back upon his bench, Goddard, in a fine spirit of amity, jumped again to his feet, trying to sing. He had no more notion of tune than an anchor stock, but roared in an ear-splitting way:

“Then fill a rousing cup wi' me,
For there be naught to pay!
And drink to wee-man as she be
From France to far Cathay!”

He had reached a state of mind in which he cared little enough for king, priest, or the devil, and Salvation was in little better part, striving to preach a sermon in French, of which language he had no notion whatever. In the middle of his salty verse, Goddard was set upon by several of the younger men and lifted bodily upon the table. There he stood for a moment swaying awkwardly from one foot to the other, blinking at the light which swung to the rafters a foot from his nose.

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Then he shouted,

“Mounseers, my voice is like the run of the topsail haulyard pollys. I can't sing—an'—blood an'

ouns!—I won't sing."

"Par la mort! try it again, try it, mon ami!"

"Non, mounseers,—but by the sakrey blue, I can keep a-givin' ye healths so long as ye can stand—or sit—for the matter o' that."

"Bigre! It seems true that this sailor-man has a paunch like the great water duct of St. Michel. But give us your toast. What is it, then?"

"Yes, speak out, mon brave, some of us will understand you—diable n'importe! What is it?"

"Ye can comprenay or not, but—odds bobs!—Nay, Jem, I'll say what I like. There may be traitors among us; but, ventre blue! I'm a free sailor of Queen Bess and fear no scut of a Spaniard as ever twisted a thumb-screw. The marrow-bones o' the best ha' kissed the dust this many a time. An' will again for English an' French, from this to Floridy an' back agin."

Some of the more timid in the crowd looked around half-fearfully and a warning "Sh!" came from the throats of some.

But Goddard was not to be daunted. He took a swig from his pot and raised his voice,

"Ye've started me now an' hear me out, ye shall, ye maidens ye! To hell with Philip! I'll tell ye why. Because there is money to be got in Spanish ships. One day soon Jem an' me will sprinkle, not—hic—coppers, but *gold*, lads! Why, the *San Cristobal* had more gold than ye'll find this side o' Hesper-hades, with all ye'r talk o' Floridy. The devil a better berth do we want than the *Griffin*. Master Davy Devil—hic—can smell the gold ten leagues at sea. An' so, here's that every—French—hic—captain may have the luck of Davy Devil!"

Here a whisp of a youth got up, drunk and quarrelsome.

"Monsieur, the sailor," he said, "you speak—much of gold. You have—hic—captured many ships. Why therefore do we drink s-sack?"

Goddard put his hands to his hips and glared down at the boy. First his brows met and he did not know what to say. Then, as the humor struck him, he burst into a laugh.

"We drink sack because 'tis good for the entrails of hairy men. An' till you grow a beard, me son, 'tis plain enough suet should do for you. But, 'twas a fair question. We drink—hic—sack because we have no gold. But wait! Wait all of ye another day or so an' I promise the rarest in France to run down ye're throats. Why, lads,—hic—Captain Sydney Killigrew hath upon his person in jewels the finest—hic—belt o' treasure in all France, that—"

He stopped and looked drunkenly from one to another. He was dumb with horror at having told the secret of Coligny's treasure. His hands fell to his sides and the pot dropped to the table and floor, breaking another as it fell. Then something flew through the air crashing into the light and Goddard fell to the floor. There was a skurry for the door and the strange men who had sat in the corner slipped out into the night and went running down the street as fast as their legs could carry them.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH I LEARN SOMETHING.

Confusion reigned at the house in the Rue Etienne. The Sieur de la Notte, sick at heart and searching peace for Madame, had set his mind upon going with Admiral Ribault to Florida, in hope of escaping the persecution of those who hated him at the French court. For my part, since I had yet to perform my duty to the men who employed me and must find Admiral Coligny at Paris, it mattered little whether Mademoiselle were in France or Florida. I would probably not see her again in any event. Yet I could not forbear asking to speak with her before the ships sailed away.

When I reached the house she was with Madame and could have but a word with me. She was, I thought, a little haughty; but none the less, she graciously promised me an hour in the morning. So I stopped below for two hours or more with the Sieur de la Notte, telling him of my plans and arranging that I might have, through Ribault, two companions under arms, to go with me and my sailors to Paris. I also helped him in the disposition of some of his own affairs, so that it was near midnight when I left the house. I went straightway to the hostel where I had left my seamen.

An account of the conduct of Smith and Goddard at the hostel did not reach my ears until many days afterwards when leagues at sea, with their consciences purged and their minds cleared by the strife of winds and seas, they came to me and told me what had happened.

As it was, when I reached the door, the place was reeking with the fumes of spilled liquor and prone upon the floor lay Salvation Smith. Half across a bench with a cut over his pate was Goddard, snoring and swearing by turns. The keeper of the place, a small, fat, greasy person, moved from the one to the other, using all his arts to persuade them to leave the place, with a frequent threat of calling the watch, vowing that the town council would be upon him and that the good repute of his house was gone forever. Whenever he came near the one or the other, there would be an outburst of maudlin oaths from Goddard, who still held by the handle a

drinking pot, and made a play to strike with it at the Frenchman as he approached.

I was in no mood to look upon the offense of my henchmen lightly. I knew not what indiscretion they might have committed, and bearing about me the jewels I had received that day, I had no humor to stay longer in so public a place where an unlucky accident might rid me of both my money and friends, to say nothing of employment. Yet I could not leave them in this plight, for if found they must surely have been known by De Baçan and his friends and ill treated, if not done away with. I first kicked Smith, who seemed the least drunk, and then Goddard; bringing them both at last to a sullen sitting posture, to the great joy of mine host, who saw at last a chance of being rid of his troublesome guests. When they saw it was I, they sobered for the moment, and by shaking them and dashing water in their faces I got them in some sort out of the door—to have it speedily shut to and barred behind us.

They were drunk as flying-fish and went reeling from one side of the street to the other, Goddard at last coming against a wall headforemost, so that he fell in a heap and would move no more. Smith had revived in the air and was fairly well set upon his legs. But he stood by my side as I tried to lift his friend, looking first at the ground and then at the stars, saying foolishly many times over, "God help us! What have I done!" to the end that I thought he had lost his wits altogether. I questioned him and bade him help me, but he stood there looking like the fool that he was and offering no hand in aid. Tiring at last of his gibberish, I fetched him a cuff upon the head which brought him up into the wind. And between us we got Job Goddard again upon his feet.

The street now took a sharp turn down past the Church of Saint Jacques and into a portion of the town I had not entered before. The way was very dark, the gloom being lightened but little by the fluttering glimmer of a rush-light here and there behind some half-closed shutter. The streets were deserted, no sign of guards or soldiers being heard or seen. We made no little commotion as we shuffled down toward the port, for Smith was staggering from this side to that and Goddard lay upon my shoulder a dead weight, his feet scraping along upon the cobblestones as we went! His arm was around my back and neck and this may have prevented my hearing the sound of footsteps behind us.

For, of a sudden, there flew past my head a stone the size of my two fists, which went against a wall hard by and broke into a hundred pieces. I turned just in time to note the bulk of a man pitching upon me in the starlight. He had me well off my guard and caught me sidewise, so that I tripped upon Goddard and we three went to the ground in one snarling, struggling mass, kicking and rolling about upon the pavement, he first uppermost and then I.

There were others too, for I saw Smith strike out and then go down with his man, struggling fiercely. I had no wish to draw a weapon, for I still thought them but common thieves and felt I might protect myself. But my opinion of my ability was to be my undoing, as it has often been. At last I shook myself free of this fellow upon the ground and got upon one knee, when I saw two others with bludgeons dancing about and aiming at my head. Twice, thrice, did I catch stinging blows upon my arms and wrists which were like to have broken them, when another more strongly dealt than the others, caught me full upon the bare head and I knew no more.

It seemed hours, days and then weeks that I lay in a hideous dream in which I knew not whether I lived or was dead. I fancied I heard the voice of Mademoiselle speaking to me and then there would come the menacing laugh of Diego de Baçan. I dimly saw flickering lights and felt the presence of people about me, but there was such a ringing in my ears that I could hear nothing. By and by my brain was less clouded and I had a mind to open my eyes. With the coming of consciousness there was a great pain in my head, which from numbness turned to burning and caused much anguish. But I could now hear the sound of voices and I knew it was no dream, so I gave no sign. Faintly I made out a row of brown ceiling rafters, which seemed to float here and there in a moving haze. I saw uncertainly the wooden floor upon which I lay stretched stark as one dead, and then discerned a table at which sat several persons. A light burned upon it, casting, as it flickered, great shadows which moved unsteadily from wall to rafter and back again. As I began to see clearly I made out one of the men to be a priest. His cowl was pushed back from his face and he listened to the man opposite him, who was talking.

This man was bent forward over a parchment on the table and he read portions of it to his companions. He had a high forehead and an imperious air which carried weight with the others. But his face was hard and cruel, and his mouth and nose at the corners wore deep and ugly lines which looked to have been seared in with an iron. When he smiled it was as though he twisted his features unwillingly, so unnatural did it seem. I marked all these things as one sometimes will in moments of great tension. I had good reason afterwards to learn that my judgment was true. He was Pedro Menendez de Avilés, the hardest man in all the Spanish marine, now but just appointed Adelantado of the Floridas. The face of the third man was turned away from me. He was a big man and his shadow fell over me so that I could make him out the more clearly. There was no mistaking the easy set of the head and shoulders as he lolled upon his chair, or the grace of his limbs and body. He had not spoken; but I knew it was De Baçan.

This for the first time brought me to my wits. I knew not how long I had lain or where I was. It was enough that I was in the hands of this Spaniard and that my girdle of jewels and gold was stolen. It tried me sorely to think at all, and with Mademoiselle gone I hardly cared what might happen. But I knew that my chance of escape, had I any, lay in making them believe me still

unconscious and done almost to death. So I lay quite still with my eyes half closed, fearing almost to breathe, and straining my ears to catch every word of their talk, which, carried on in French, now came to my ears quite clearly.

"These Huguenots, you say, father, will go to the River of May?" asked De Avilés.

"It is so reported in the town. They will sail in seven small ships and will muster three hundred men, with some women and many artisans bearing everything necessary to form this colony."

"And the colony of Laudonnière, what of that?"

"Word has been received that there is mutiny against the Commander Laudonnière,—who is accused of many misdemeanors by those who have returned. I am bidden tell you, by those who are close in our councils at Paris, that you need fear nothing from them." [72]

"But they have a fort and are well provided with munitions of war,—we may not be able to strike them separately. If they combine forces they may even be too much for us; for heretics though they be these Huguenots are still very excellent fighters."

"Your Excellency knows best the qualities of good men-at-arms. The Adelantado of Florida must not be defeated. Though you and your people be Spaniards, they are still Catholics and firm in the Christian faith. It is a sainted war which you are waging and when you strike, the hand of God will be with you. Therefore, I say, have no fear. For those who have sent me to you know what they know when they pray the Holy Virgin for your success."

I could hardly believe what I heard. Were there bigots so base that they would destroy their own people and their own nation? And Mademoiselle had gone with the Huguenots! I grew weak again and trembled from head to foot as one with an ague.

De Baçan began speaking now and I nerved myself to listen.

"Your Excellency needs no information of mine upon the designs of these French people in the territory of Spain. They will lose no time in setting with fine skill upon the ignorant minds of the savage peoples of those parts who otherwise may yet be saved. Yet your Excellency should take no chances of defeat." [73]

Menendez was stroking his mustache. His eyes glittered strangely.

"What would you advise, father?" he said.

"There is no way to stop or even delay this Ribault," said the Jesuit. "There remains but to petition the King to increase your force. 'Tis an expedition," he laughed, "which is as good for the soul as the purse and the body, and there will be many to profit by it. But a few hundred more men and three or four more ships will make you as secure in your possessions as the most Catholic King himself in his throne and his people."

"There is much that is wise in what you say," said the Adelantado, "but the King has no money for this enterprise. The money which I have secured has come from my own people of the Asturias, and I know not whither to go for more."

De Baçan here arose from his seat and walked cautiously to the door and window. I lay as one dead, holding my breath in fear lest I should be discovered. He came and bent over me for a moment. It seemed an eternity, and I felt the look of his eyes as they pierced me through and through. He seemed satisfied with the scrutiny, for he went back to the table; putting both hands upon it, he leaned far over toward the Adelantado. [74]

"What would your Excellency do for one who could find this money?" he said.

Menendez looked up, smiling his strange smile.

"You are eager, my friend," he replied calmly. "It might be worth much or little,—perhaps a share of my profits—perhaps—nothing. But what do you know?"

"It is for this I wished to see your Excellency." He paused. "I have managed an affair of no small profit," he laughed, "and I am no glutton."

Unfastening his doublet he unwrapped from around his body the treasure of Coligny, and tossed it upon the table. "There is enough for a thousand men and more," he said.

The Adelantado undid the leather bands gravely, while the eyes of the priest started almost out of their sockets as the glittering stones tumbled out upon the table. The Adelantado uttered an exclamation and the three of them sat there silent for a moment, with their eyes shining like the wonderful stones they looked upon.

The priest was the first to speak. "A thousand men, surely!" he said.

Then the Adelantado ran the jewels through his fingers. He gloated over them fiercely, for in the glittering faces of those little baubles he saw before him the scenes of blood and persecution which were to come. He saw himself master of all the great domain that had been allotted to him and he dreamed of conquests and treasures such as no man had won since the beginning of the world. [75]

He raised his head at last. "You have done well, De Baçan," he said. "You have done well, my son. You shall be my Captain of Camp. We will reach an agreement upon your duties and profits without difficulty. These jewels shall go with me to the Biscayan ports and we will have a fleet and company of men great enough to take the islands of Elizabeth if need be. We will have galleons of a thousand tons, the tallest that float and—"

"But your Excellency cannot fail," interposed the priest, who had been eying him narrowly, "to give some tribute to the Church—some tribute for your safety?"

"Yes, father. But for the present, as you can see, we will need all of this treasure to prepare for our journey, which indeed is as much for God as for the King."

The Jesuit pulled the cowl up over his head and turned upon De Baçan fiercely.

"You have told me, Diego de Baçan, that you have done this hulking English heretic to death for the profit of your soul and the glory of the Church. In this you have lied,—I know now that he was set upon because of a private quarrel. It is plain you have taken him and his money unfairly. You become a servant of the Evil One, a thief and murderer, and should suffer the penalty of the Church."

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Both Diego and Menendez arose, uncovered their heads, and crossed themselves. Then the Adelantado leaned over and picked up three large stones. These he extended to the priest. The cleric lowered his head to conceal his cupidity; but took the jewels quickly, putting them inside his gown, mumbling the while some Latin words to himself. "*Absolvo te*, my son," he said.

Then De Baçan put the rest of the jewels back in the girdle and fastened it about him.

"This Englishman was a most comfortable prize," he laughed. "It was a little quarrel of my own, father. I confess it, yonder Englishman has caused me great trouble since the taking of the *Cristobal*. There is a lady and—well,—he was forever balking me and I hated him. But faugh! tomorrow he will be dead and there is an end of the matter." The three of them came over to me and De Avilés fetched me a kick in the ribs. Had it been Diego, I must have groaned outright, for De Baçan did nothing lightly. But I lay quiet, and aided by the darkness escaped notice. They took the light and went out through the iron door, locking it behind them, and I heard their laughter and jesting as they went down the hallway and so out through a gate which must have been at the end of the passage.

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The sound of their footsteps had not died away before I was upon my hands and knees groping my way toward the window, through which stole a dusky light. It was not until then that I discovered how weak I was. My shirt and doublet were dank with blood, for my head had been sadly cut; and my neck was so stiff I could scarce turn my head from the one side to the other. I got up with difficulty, but my head swam and I fell heavily to the floor again. The room seemed to be pitching from this side to that and the square of light where the window was swayed to and fro, sickening me at last so that I lay still until I might gather resolution and not again overdo my strength. My mind was chaos. What had become of Goddard and Smith, and how long had I been in this place? I knew not—nor for a time seemed much to care. With the weakness there came a feeling of indifference and I was content to lie there, with no thought for anything. But presently the faintness passed and I began trying to unravel the skein of my thoughts.

Mademoiselle had sailed with the expedition of Admiral Ribault,—and yet the Jesuit had said they would sail on the morrow. They had then been delayed,—or else—yes, it must be—the night of the robbery had not yet passed away. And with that I grew more collected. Perhaps there was yet time to see the Sieur de la Notte and the Admiral Ribault, and warn them of this plot of the Catholics, the secret of which had come into my possession. The Catholics of Spain would destroy the Huguenot colony and certain Catholics of France had connived at the villainy. That was a great secret of State and surely one to make the blood of any honest Frenchman, whether Catholic or Calvinist, boil with shame and anger.

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Then, when I thought that it was through my loss of the treasure of Coligny that this thing had come to be possible, I was in great turmoil of spirit and clinched my jaws fiercely as I searched in mind for some plan to redeem myself. I tried to rise and at last got upon my feet with a great effort, and to the table, where I limply hung. And Captain Hooper! What would he say when I went to him? I had no heart to think of it—I knew him well. He would ask me why was I there to tell him of it? Yes, truly, I was out of employment. Fortune had smiled too favorably upon me to smile for long.

I sat swaying there, trying to gather strength to break out of this vile place, when I heard the sound of whispering close at hand; but whether it came from inside or out I could not tell. If it were De Baçan, I resolved to dash upon him with a chair and so, if I could stay upon my feet, perhaps gain the outer door. I listened for a moment and then heard plainly that it came from outside the window. I crouched down below the jamb listening intently. Then to my great joy there came a low whistle in exact counterfeit of a call upon the *Great Griffin*.

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My friends had not forgotten me then!

My joy was so great I could scarce refrain from shouting. But I found I could not even if I would. I managed so to answer that they heard my whistle, for there came an exclamation and a bulky shape appeared at the bars of the window.

"Master Sydney, sir, are ye safe?" came in a half whisper, and there was a world of comfort in the voice. It was Smith! And I reassured him in a moment; then managing to get the table over under the window, mounted upon it and found my head and shoulders just abreast of the sill. There were heavy bars of iron before the window, but rough and rusty to the touch. So Smith brought a piece of timber, which he used as a pry, and with help managed to snap and then bend a bar so that I could let them haul me up and out through the narrow opening. But my strength had been sorely tried and so it was some moments before I could stand upright and look about me.

It was but a short time before the dawn. The Sieur de la Notte upheld me on one side and on

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the other was a tall man whom I knew not. He had a beard reaching to his waist and gave several brisk orders; I afterwards learned it was Admiral Jean Ribault. Several men went about the building, knocking and seeking to discover if there were any one within; but the Admiral called them back, bidding them be quiet. Withal, being very weak, by great effort I managed to tell them of the Catholic plot and that the Spaniards would doubtless soon return and it might be possible to recover the treasure.

This was as important for Ribault as it was for me, for it meant much to the Lutheran cause. But he would not have it so, saying Menendez was well upon his way and letting me know, in a sad way which I liked not in one of so fine a bearing, that it would be unwise to foment trouble. He believed in his strength and ability to hold the land of Florida against all nations; he wished only to depart without molestation or hindrance. Of a truth, I was so sick and weak that I knew not what they did. My effort of mind had been too great, for now that I was safe and had told my story, it grew weaker and I could not think. They half led, half carried me, to the Rue Etienne and there put me to bed.

CHAPTER VII. IN WHICH I FIND NEW EMPLOYMENT.

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I awoke the next morning to find Mademoiselle standing by my bedside with a potion which she bade me take. In a short while there came a chirurgion who looked at my head, bathing and bandaging it, to the end that in an hour or so I felt so much better that I could sit upright and listen to Mademoiselle as she told me of their plans. Surely no medicine were so good for mind or body as the sight of her as she moved here and there about the room; and when she brought me my draught and leaned over to give it me, I found myself holding the cup to my lips without swallowing, taking my cure not through my lips but through my eyes.

Then says she,

“Nay, Master Sydney, you must drink it down. It is not bitter.”

No, it was not bitter. I wished that I might be always ill. But she was not impatient. She looked upon me with the eyes of friendliness and interest. What there was of coldness had disappeared from her manner; for the fancies of such as she are engulfed always in the instincts of womanhood. She put her hand upon my wrist, with fine hardihood counting the beatings of my pulse, her eyes cast upon a minute-glass. Then she smiled as she found that the fever was less, though for my part, from the thumping of my heart, I could not see that I was in any better case than I should be.

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I had murmured but a word of thanks—telling her that I was better. Thus far I was content to say nothing so long as she would only stay where I might look at her. She, herself, was balm to my wounds. But when she was about to leave the room to tell her father that I had awakened, I called to her.

“Mademoiselle, just a word. It is hard to say the words of gratitude I would. I am but a yeoman of Queen Bess, a sea-rover if you like. I am without friends save yourselves, and without either money or employment. In a few days or perhaps hours you too will be gone. I shall never see you again.” I paused. “Otherwise I should not speak.”

She looked at me curiously and then moved as though to go, but I made a gesture which held her. I knew not what had come over me. The words rushed upon my tongue and I could not restrain them. I was rough and brutal in my frankness. But then what mattered it? She was going to one end of the world, and I to another; and I wished only that she should know—that she should believe.

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“Listen, Mademoiselle. I know that I am fit only to serve and obey you. You are noble and I—whatever claim I have—am but a loutish fellow. Why I have the audacity to speak to you I do not know, save that by kindness you have given me that right. Listen you must. I love you, Mademoiselle, I love you! That is all.”

She had stood facing the door, her hands before her and her eyes cast down, quietly listening. But as I went on her hands dropped to her sides, her head lifted and her eyes, first mildly curious and then indignant, flashed at me angrily.

“Stop, monsieur!” she said, and so haughtily that the blood went back upon my heart. She was no small woman, but to me, unworthy of her, she seemed in her pride and majesty to add to her stature half again. She turned red and white by turns, while her lips seemed to be seeking the words with which to deter me. Yet I could not have stopped any more than I could have gone to find Coligny’s treasure. When she spoke again, it was with a coolness and precision, that chilled me to the heart.

“Master Killigrew, however much we may have been in your debt, you need make no doubt, you are amply repaid. For shame, monsieur! To take advantage of our pity and our friendliness! It were not difficult to see you are better. Adieu, monsieur!” And with this she opens the door and walks through it, looking no more at me and bearing an expression which I knew not, one in which pride and pity seemed struggling for the mastery. When the door had closed, I heard the

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sound of her feet running up the stairs and then a door swung to with violence overhead.

I was a great hulking brute, deserving but scant consideration. I know not what it was that impelled me to speak as I had done,—a hand-pressure on the *Cristobal*, her sympathy in my affairs or something in the look she gave me when she stood over me with the physic. But unused to soft words, I could no more have restrained myself than I could the seas which plashed the bows of the *Griffin*.

As it was, when she left the room all the light went out from life. I only knew I could not stay longer in that house. If I had forfeited the right to her friendship, then I must go and at once. I could not bear it that she thought of me as she did. If she told the *Sieur de la Notte*, as she doubtless would, and I should lose his good opinion too, then surely I should be undone. I was unlucky, and what was worse, a fool into the bargain. Getting up slowly, leaning against the wall, I managed to put upon me my clothing and doublet. I did not know where I was to go. I could not go to England. Nor to Captain Hooper's agent,—I was ruined, and could picture the face of that oily Frenchman as I told him the jewels were gone. It would be serious for me. It meant prison, at the worst; at the best, Captain Hooper's disdain. Of the two, however, I think I feared the former least. I would go I cared not whither, back to the house where I had been confined perhaps, to see if Diego de Baçan might not return;—to Spain perhaps in pursuit of Menendez. I knew not. At last I stumbled to the door of the room and so out into the passage, and had but laid my hand upon the bolts of the outer door when there were footsteps in the hallway and I turned my head to see Mademoiselle coming toward me. Her eyes were cast down, but as she came near she lifted her head and extended her hand as one man might do to another, saying,

"Forgive me, my friend,—I did not mean it."

I held out my hand stupidly, looking at her and replying,

"Ah, Mademoiselle, I have no further mission in this house."

She clasped my hand strongly, leading me back again into the room where I had lain. And there was not strength to resist.

In a little while there came the *Sieur de la Notte* to inquire for my health. He sat down beside me and entered straightway upon the business he had in mind.

"I have been thinking much of you, good Sydney," he began, "and have come to ask your plans."

"You are very kind, monsieur," I replied as I grasped his hand, "but I have no plans. If I cannot replace or set finger upon the treasure which was entrusted to me, I have no further hope of employment from my sovereign; for she likes not men who do not succeed. I shall wait here a few days, when I will get upon the track of De Avilés, striving to do by secrecy what I might not accomplish by strength."

La Notte shook his head.

"It will not do, *mon ami*,—it will not do. I know it,—for the Admiral has just told me the state of these affairs. The Catholics at the Court will countenance this expedition and will hold Menendez as safe in France as though he were in his own Asturias. You may as well whistle for the jewels, Sydney, for you will see them no more."

I sighed deeply, for I felt that what he said was true.

"You yourself have heard enough to convince you that all matters at the French court are not as they seem. You will not succeed in any private undertaking against Spain,—sure of that you may be. And, monsieur, you had better be bled by leeches than by pike-heads for awhile. Listen to the Admiral's offer. We sail on the morrow for the land of promise, good Sydney, three hundred strong, to build up a great Christian nation across the ocean. Ribault has bid me offer you a commission as lieutenant aboard his flagship, for he is short-handed in officers and needs those who have a knowledge of ships; also he can employ any of your men who have a taste for this venture in New France."

I saw that he was trying to conceal what he had done for me, under plea of his own advantage. I could say nothing, but extended my hand and he pressed it warmly. Mademoiselle had been sitting by listening until then. Now as I looked at her for half a sign she got up and busied herself preparing some medicine for Madame.

"Will you go, *mon ami*? If you like it not perhaps you may return upon the vessels when they come again to France."

I was silent, looking still at Mademoiselle. This time she turned and said quietly,

"It is a fine venture for a man of ingenuity and daring."

What could I do? Everything else vanished before the thought that I was still in her favor and that too in spite of what I had said to her. I would voyage of a verity to the ends of the earth with no further wish than to be near her.

I said that I would go, and saw no more of Mademoiselle on that morning. When I got a glimpse of her in the afternoon she but nodded her head, speaking not at all and taking so little notice of me, indeed, that I might have been but a serving man.

I wrote a long letter to Captain Hooper, giving a correct report of all that had happened upon the *Cristobal* and in Dieppe. I told him of the condition of affairs in France and how it was impossible to recover what had been lost. I told him I doubted not that these Spanish vessels

would soon set out for Florida, and that my chances for winning back his esteem and any treasure or prize money was better in Florida than in France. I wrote of Fort Caroline, where the French would be found, and saying that should he desire such a venture in the *Griffin*, there would be honor and prizes in plenty where the Spaniards put in. This I entrusted through the Sieur de la Notte to the captain of a vessel sailing for Portsmouth, who might be relied upon to deliver it safely to the care of Martin Cockrem at the Pelican.

That much done, I felt relieved in mind, and when Admiral Ribault came late that night, could discuss with him many details of the expedition. I had then a chance to learn what manner of man I was to serve. [89]

He was tall and of a commanding presence. His face was swarthy and marked by the crossing white wrinkles of a man of the sea. His rather thin lips were hid under a long moustache and his beard reached quite down to his waist. His nose was big and not ill formed, but it was in his eyes that one noted the character of the man. These were gray-blue and kindly. As he talked on, they flashed keenly and one saw his power. It was not a strong face,—nor a weak one, but it showed him as he was, an able and gallant seaman and gentleman, loving above all else his life, his Country and his God.

The next morning I awoke much refreshed, and with the help of two lieutenants of Ribault, managed in some sort to make my way down to the docks and go to the *Trinity*, Ribault's flagship, upon which I had been given my commission. I was still very weak and could expect to do no duty for awhile, but the breath of the sea as it swept up into the dip of land, sent fresh blood pulsing through my veins and gave me a new interest in the people about me with whose lives mine was to be mingled for many months. The most of that day I spent upon the vessel's deck watching the final loading of stores and learning the lead of the tackling. I could see the six other vessels lying near us in the Arques, and I marked that but four of them were of any considerable size; the others were small vessels of less than half the tonnage of the *Griffin*, being sprung high up in the stern, lacking her grace in run of line and length and rake of mast. All of the ships were well out of the water like the *Cristobal* and had a great slant of after-castle, the topmost deck of which sloped uncomfortably forward. But they were staunch vessels for the country and time, and with their armaments, which seemed very complete, might be expected to make a good argument against ships of the same metal. [90]

But I liked little the temper of the company, which to me seemed scarce suited to the kind of work before us. The cavaliers came aboard in twos and threes, many of them of somber mien and habit, but mostly poor gentlemen who had but this resource left to them. Some were gaily attired and I marked a curled moustache here, an ear jewel there, or a ruff in the latest twist of fashion.

Nor were the seamen the honest yeomen of England. They worked willingly enough, but they danced and jested among themselves, laughing and singing foolish songs like lads of ten years or thereabouts.

"Body o' me, sir," said Goddard gruffly, "they're ladies, every scut of 'em! Blast me,—ye can't make a fightin' crew out of men as won't swear!"

I smiled and mentioned Salvation Smith. [91]

"Oh well, he's different, sir," he answered. "'Tis his principles, Master Sydney. That's all's the matter with him. When he fights he's a-cursin' all the time in his heart, I know,—he couldn't fight, else."

With regard to the company of adventurers it made me feel no better to learn that there was another to share my opinion. It was no child's play, this voyage, on which we were going. It was work for staunch-bodied men with big limbs and stiff hands, and not the slender, pink-fingered gentlemen I had seen thus far. When I thought that the safety of Mademoiselle lay with the disposition of these people I was more troubled than ever.

She came aboard late in the afternoon, and with Madame and the Sieur de la Notte went at once to the cabin. Soon Admiral Ribault came alongside in his pinnace and signaled the fleet to get under way. Amid the firing of cannon upon the shore we passed out of the river on the ebb of the tide and with a fair wind set the broad bows of the *Trinity* squarely into the red path of light that shimmered towards the sun, the color of blood. I shuddered a little; then laughed aloud at my womanish thought. Surely, my illness had made me weak indeed.

In a few days Mademoiselle came upon the deck with Madame. I had grown so strong that I was taking my day watches now. My pulses tingled anew and my lungs drank their fill of the salt air. The old love of the life was in me again. But I could not make out the manner of Mademoiselle de la Notte. Twice in the first week did I go up to her and address her, but I was so ill at ease and her manner so distant that I turned away and sought another part of the vessel. Then when she saw that she had hurt me and that perhaps the difference of our positions—she thinking me not to be of gentle birth—had gone more deeply than she had wished, she called me to her and bade me place a stool for her and one for Madame and wrap them in their cloaks, talking cheerfully the while. This I did silently, going then forward to my place of duty. I had no wish to force my presence upon her and so kept at a distance, speaking only when it was not to be avoided. And yet my heart was sore that she should treat me so. [92]

Then there would come two or three of those bejeweled gentlemen; who, recovered from their sickness, stood by her side talking to her gaily after the manner of the sparks at a levee, flaunting their fine scented handkerchiefs. This she seemed to enjoy, and made my cup of bitterness full to overflowing.

But by and by there came a change. One day, the third week from Dieppe, while I was talking between my watches with the sister of Lieutenant Bachasse, Mademoiselle motioned that she would speak with me. She dismissed those fine hangers-on and asked me what she had done that I had treated her in so ill a fashion. I said nothing; for it did not become me to cavil. She knew well why I had not waited upon her, and why I would not speak. I seemed to see it in the way she spoke; and I learned from that time what discernment a woman has upon all matters which concern the heart of a man. Things after that were better between us. By and bye, no day passed that we did not talk together; sometimes in presence of Madame or Monsieur the Vicomte, and sometimes alone.

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Oh, the wonder of those days and nights upon the ocean! When the afternoon sun shimmered fair upon the amber seas to the southward, and the sails about us were picked out in silver against the purple of the horizon, turning as the sun dropped down, to ruddy gold and bronze and then fading away into the gray softness of dusk! And then, when the gulls and dolphins ceased to play and the moon came out, we would sometimes lean upon the bulwarks, just she and I, looking down along the sides to the bow-wave where the fire of the southern waters turned the gray of the foam to soft glowing flames which warmly kissed the ship and then danced away like sprites into the darkness beyond.

"It is an ocean of velvet,—a fair ocean," she would say softly.

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"It is Heaven, Mademoiselle," I would answer.

We talked much of the things which had been and of those to come, and I told her the stories of faraway lands that I had seen. She wondered greatly at some of the things I knew; and yet for all that I felt at times as though I were but a child beside her in every other thing save the mere buffets of life. She was haughty no more; for it seemed in that gray immensity of murmuring sea and starlit sky that all was equal between us, and that we two were alone, close to our Maker.

CHAPTER VIII.

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WE REACH THE NEW LAND.

After many days there came, one afternoon, loud and cheery from the fore-mast head, the cry of "Land! Land!" Only one who has been three months upon an ocean, unfathomable and limitless, can know the magic of the word. The signals passed it to the other vessels of the fleet, trumpets blared and cheer upon cheer and song upon song echoed and re-echoed across the water. Crew and passengers upon the *Trinity* came tumbling up from below, jostling and crowding one another in their madness to be among the first to get a glimpse of their home that was to be. Even those sick with the scurvy and fever turned out of their hammocks and, climbing to the deck, fell upon their knees to thank God that the voyage was near ended. All thought of savage Carib or more savage Spaniard was banished, for there to their gaze, shimmering purple under the western sun, was their haven of refuge. They stretched their limbs like people awaking from a long sleep; and, as the ship glided onward, leaned forward upon the bulwarks as though they would leap into the water. They strained to catch the first aromatic breath of the pines in their nostrils and their tongues clove to their parched and fevered mouths as they sighed for the fruits which hung there beyond, luscious and ripe for their plucking.

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By sundown we had sailed into a little river. Here was a fine sandy bottom, and we cast anchor for the night. So impatient were the seamen and passengers that some of them, not to be withheld, took one of the pinnaces and went upon the shore. Ribault, after warning them against the savages, consented to this, and soon the beach was aglow with fires which they lighted to keep off wild beasts; and parties well armed went searching among the uplands for fruit and game. Throughout the night we upon ship-board could hear the seamen and cavaliers as they laughed and shouted. At daybreak they came aboard again, torn and bleeding from the thorns and brambles, but happy as urchins. They bore several large panniers of luscious wild pomegranates of a small variety, and grapes of great size and sweetness.

But the Admiral would not tarry here long. He did not know how soon the Spaniards might be coming, and he wished to learn what had happened in his absence to Laudonnière, the Commander at Fort Caroline. Many things had been charged against that officer and Ribault desired to establish the French Protestants firmly in their colony, and secure them speedily from attack or molestation. Accordingly the ships weighed anchor again and we sailed up the coast to the River of Dolphins. This had been so called by Ribault because of the great number of fish of that name which disported themselves in its waters.

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Seeing no sign of living persons we sailed still further northward to the River of May, which we reached on the 29th of August, 1565. The channel of the river being narrow and the draught of the large ships being great, we cast anchor at about half a league from shore.

Ribault, anxious to communicate at once with Laudonnière, immediately fitted out all the large barges from the fleet and crowded crews into them, fully armed and equipped. He knew not what might have happened. I, being an officer upon the flagship, went with him in the pinnace, and so we made our way up the river.

At last we sighted a small headland or bluff which rose abruptly from the water where the river

narrowed, and under its shadow we could just make out the bastions of Fort Caroline. As we came near we saw a great commotion upon the shore, officers running out of the Fort brandishing their swords; and two of the soldiers began casting loose a gun. Then we knew that they took us for enemies of France. A soldier ran down the beach and fired an arquebus at us, but the ball went skipping along the water and did us no damage. The Admiral, seeing that they did not know us and thinking harm might ensue, hereupon stood up in the pinnace. We saw one of the officers take off his morion and throw it into the air with a shout of joy. Then there was cheering, and we knew they had recognized the Admiral. In a few moments, under the sturdy sweep of the oarsmen, the barges grated upon the pebbly beach and we tumbled out among those assembled there. There was great joy among the young French gentlemen, some of them running to the newcomers and kissing them with great display of friendship upon both cheeks. The cannon, which but a moment before were to have been turned upon us, were fired in salute and the air resounded with glad cries and cheers.

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There were many Indians of the tribe of the Chief Satouriona upon the beach. Fine, straight-bodied savages they were, painted in bright colors all over the body and wearing only a breech-clout, and a band around the head. They were most grave of countenance and smiled little; but very friendly, crowding around the Admiral, bowing and touching their heads to the earth, marvelling at the great length of his beard.

I could see that the Fort was erected in a careful manner though sadly out of repair. It was built in the form of a triangle and surrounded by a trench, the side toward the river enclosed with a palisade of planks of timber after the manner in which gabions are made. In the middle was a great court eighteen paces long and upon one side of this, the "corps de garde." Opposite to it, the living house. Laudonnière, asked us to his lodging-place and gave us a wine fermented from the grape of the country, most soothing to the palate and livening to the vitals.

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Under the close questioning of the Admiral, Laudonnière related the events of the past few months, showing the sad straits into which his people had fallen for lack of food and munitions. He told of the mutiny of his men and how he had intended entering two of his smaller vessels and returning to France. The Admiral found that the charges against him were untrue, and offered him a high command. But Captain Laudonnière was disconsolate, saying that his honor had been touched and that he must soon return to France to defend himself against his enemies.

We talked far into the night, Vasseur, Verdier and De Brésac, three lieutenants of the garrison with whom I had much talk, giving me a fair good idea of the country and people. It seemed that Laudonnière had no need to have given up so easily. It was hard to see how, in a country abounding in animals good to eat, in fish and in fruit and corn, they should have been reduced to such distress as they were in. There are beasts of every kind, and Sir John Hawkins has said that there are lions and tigers as well as unicorns, but I saw none of these, though there were crocodiles in great abundance.

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Vasseur told me a habit of the natives who when they travel have a kind of herb dried, which they put in an earthen cup and set a-fire. Then they suck the smoke of this through a cane or reed and it has a strange and pleasing effect, satisfying their hunger so that they can live four or five days without meat or drink. Some of the company had come to use this herb and had grown to like it well, though at first it made them much inward discomfort. All of these things are known in England now, for Sir Walter Raleigh hath brought this custom of tobacco smoking into the court.

In the morning the three smaller vessels of the fleet came up, bringing the greater number of the colonists, among them the Sieur de la Notte and his family, and by the end of the day the rest had landed. Rude sheds of cedar stripping were built and a tolerable sheltered place was thus made to house the men until better quarters should be provided. During the first nights the women were given the barracks of the company of Laudonnière, who, for the time being, shared the lot of the newcomers. For Mistress Diane de la Notte nothing was too good, René de Laudonnière himself turning over to her and to Madame two rooms of his quarters. After seeing to their comfort I set about to aid in landing the munitions of war. This was safely done by the end of the second day and the new ordnance was mounted upon the battlements which thus commanded the river for a great distance. The shed now gave place to a stronger construction under the bastions and all worked with so great a vigor that new life animated the poor fort which but a few days before had come nigh to being deserted. Never had the prospects of the colony been brighter, and it seemed as if at last Fortune was smiling upon their efforts, which under careful management were about to be crowned with success.

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'Tis a strange thing how misfortune doth pursue even when all else in nature seems to smile. It was, I think, at midnight of the fifth day that the first great shadow fell upon the luckless settlement. We were sitting around the council table in the barracks discussing the plans of Laudonnière for the extension of the colony. Ribault sat at the end of the table, his brows knit in deep thought, his hands clasped upon the table and his beard falling down to his lap. He was much perturbed over a report which had come to him that two sails had been sighted far out to sea just as the night was falling. From time to time he would nod to one or the other, but he spoke little. At his right were Laudonnière, Vasseur, Verdier, the Swiss, Arlac, Ottigny, and Satouriona the great Carib chief with whom the Admiral was bent upon making a friendship. At his left were Saint Marie, Yonville and La Grange. Yonville was speaking of the magic mine of gold and silver that La Roquette had found which would yield ten thousand crowns apiece for every colonist and fifteen hundred thousand crowns for the King. The Admiral listened gravely, but he was a practical man and had no such flighty notions as these young gentlemen.

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I tired at last of listening to their vaporings and moved to one of the casements where I sat

listening and looking out into the night, drinking in the perfumes of the forest which the breezes of the sea were wafting toward me. Outside all was quiet save for the call of a night bird or the cry of some beast of prey as it prowled on its midnight hunt. The rain had fallen so that the odor was almost overpowering, and it was damp out toward the sea, where the clouds hung heavily with but a slight break overhead. There was a glimmer here and there from the water under the bastions. Down near the river's mouth I fancied I could see the twinkling of the lanthorns upon the *Trinity* as she swung to the tide; but the ships were almost too far away for that. My thoughts turned to Diane and I wondered—

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But as I looked into the distance toward where the ships should lay, there came suddenly two flashes of light, one beside the other, like lightning and yet not to be mistaken. I started, with an exclamation, straining my eyes, my heart beating furiously. Then clear and distinct as though but half a league away there came the sound of cannon shots!

Ribault and his officers sprang to where I stood, breathless, all a-fever with the excitement of the moment. They had not long to wait. For again the flashes came, by twos and threes, and then by broadsides, the echoes coming up the river like the roaring of distant thunder. There was commotion outside and the sentry opened the door crying "The Spaniards! The Spaniards!"

The drums beat to arms and most of the soldiers and the women too rushed out into the courtyard, where they ran hither and thither asking questions which no one could answer. The Admiral commanding silence, mounted with Ottigny and Laudonnière to the battlements where he listened and watched intently for some minutes. He knew the serious import of those sounds and what they might mean to the ships lying out there, under-manned and unprepared for battle. He knew too that the sentry had said the truth when he uttered the fear that was in his own heart. The Spanish fleet had come to Florida!

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Ribault came down from the battlements and without more ado ordered all his seamen and officers to the four smaller ships at anchor in the river. To the landing place we ran in great haste, stopping only to seize armor and weapons. In half an hour our little vessels were sailing down toward the mouth of the river. No one of us spoke, but we stood along the bulwarks listening to the sound of the cannon. It was more distant now, and from its direction we knew that the three larger ships were making out to sea. Should we be in time?

In a moment the lookout upon the fore-castle of the *Jesus* came running aft and reported that there were sounds ahead close inboard. We listened intently and in a moment heard the sound of oars grinding violently in their irons and the swash of a ship's boat through the water. A voice shouted hoarsely across the water the words "France! France!" Our men stood crooked over the bulwarks, their weapons at their shoulders, trying to pierce the darkness, and soon we could just make out a gray shadow bearing directly upon us. There was great tension as she drew nearer and the gunners blew their torches, ready to blow her out of the water at the first sign the least suspicious. Slowly she drew alongside and we saw that it was a barge of the *Trinity*. An officer came hastily over the gangway. It was Bachasse, a sub-lieutenant.

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Ribault went to him, and the soldiers crowded around.

"Is it the Spaniards?" he asked.

"It is, your Excellency," replied Bachasse shortly. He was stout and of a brusque manner—as brave a seaman as ever stood his watch.

"They came upon us late this afternoon, in five ships," he said. "Captain Bourdelais wished me to report that we were not prepared for battle. Half of our crews are at the Fort." He paused.

"Go on," said Ribault, sternly. "Tell me all and omit nothing."

"It was dark before they came upon us in earnest, our men were waiting at their guns. There was a trumpet from the Spanish flagship. Captain Bourdelais answered from the *Trinity*. We saw lanthorns and a figure upon the great vessel and we heard a strong voice say:

"'Whence does this fleet come?'

"'From France,' Captain Bourdelais replied at once.

"'What are you doing here?'

"'We bring soldiers and supplies for a fort which the King of France has built and for many others which he will soon build.'

"'Are you Catholics or Lutherans?' said the voice.

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"'We are Lutherans! we are Lutherans! Who are you?'

"'I am Pedro Menendez, general of the fleet of the King of Spain. At daybreak I will board your ships and every heretic shall die!'

"Then our men broke into laughter and jeering; 'You are cowards,' they shouted, 'come at once.'

"Then they came down upon us. Captain Bourdelais ordered the cables cut, for we were at a disadvantage. All of the ships put to sea. My Captain has sent me to you. They fired upon this boat but we escaped. They are now fighting upon the sea—and this is my report." When he had finished he bowed and stood silent.

The Admiral stroked his beard. The worst had happened and he saw that it would be war to the death. He told Bachasse to order his men upon deck and to make his boat fast to the stern of the *Jesus*. Then they came up carrying one who had been killed. So we sailed on down to the mouth

of the river.

We saw no more gun-flashes and only now and then could we hear a sound far out to sea which told us where the ships were sailing. I doubted not that it was wise of Captain Bourdelais to slip his cable and run for the open; with a good wind he might escape. By and by we heard no sounds at all. [107]

The Admiral was for going in pursuit of the flying ships, but called a consultation of his officers in the cabin and they advised against it. Fort Caroline would be without vessels or men to protect it, and the Spanish fleet might sail up within range and batter the bastions down. Their counsel at last prevailed, and at dawn the soldiers were landed upon the beach. The *Jesus* and three other vessels cast anchor in an arm of the sea behind the beach, broadside on, so that the soldiers might be protected by a brave cannon fire. Then the bowmen and arquebusiers dug into the sand, making trenches in which they might find protection from arrows and small pieces.

These were moments of great anxiety. It was not until the sun had mounted well into the sky that some sentinels who had been watching down the beach, reported a sail coming up with the brisk wind. By ten o'clock she was in plain sight and from her great bulk we made her out to be the Spanish flag-ship *San Pelayo*. She could not have been less than a thousand tons burthen; and came beautifully, sailing outside the outer bar just beyond the range of our long pieces. She wore three yellow streaks along her sides where her gun tiers were, and her sails, crossed with great red stripes and bars, never spilled a cupful as they bellied out into the wind and bore her onward, though she was dipping and pitching in the chop as she went by. Her bulwarks gleamed in the sunlight with the lines of polished helmets; and though I had no spying-glass I fancied that high up near her lanthorns I could make out the Adelantado and by his side the stalwart figure of Diego de Baçan. I bit my lips and hoped they might try to make the entrance of the river. [108]

But they threw the ship up into the wind, where she courtesied disdainfully, and then a scornful puff of smoke came from her side and a shot struck in the first line of surf. She hung there a minute and then squared away down the beach again. The Adelantado was discreet as well as valiant. Late in the afternoon three other sail were sighted, and it was soon seen that they were French. At sunset they were near enough and a boat put off from the *Gloire*, Captain Cosette himself coming ashore through the surf to make his report. He had followed the Spaniards to San Augustin and had seen that they had landed their stores and negroes and were rapidly entrenching themselves.

Many of these facts have been set forth in the writings of the Captain Laudonnière, and of Challeux the carpenter; and some stories have been written by the Spaniard Barcia and by Mendoza, the priest. Yet it is proper that everything bearing upon the events which are to follow should be known to all Christians, that they may rightly judge between these people and us. [109]

CHAPTER IX.

WE PUT TO SEA.

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After waiting all night and part of the next day we returned to the Fort, leaving a guard upon the beach, with cannon to assist the ships should they be attacked.

That night there was a council of war. Laudonnière was sick in his bed, so we went to his chamber, standing and sitting at the bedside. There were La Grange, Sainte Marie, Ottigny, Visty, Yonville, De Brésac and others. The Admiral spoke boldly and at some length. He outlined his plan, which was nothing less than an immediate attack by sea upon San Augustin, before the Spaniards had time to well entrench themselves against attack. His eye flashed as he spoke and he was good to see, for there is naught so fine as the light of battle in the eyes of a man of years. The younger men were with him body and heart, for the very boldness of the plan was to their liking.

When he had finished, Laudonnière answered, favoring the plan of remaining at Fort Caroline to fortify it against attack. La Grange and Sainte Marie got upon their feet and spoke briefly to the same effect. They all said that having lived in these parts for nearly two years, they were better qualified to speak of these things; they thought it dangerous to venture upon that coast in the month of September or October, for the storms came with terrible swiftness and devastation. [111]

Ribault reproved them for their timidity, asking whether they were valiant sailor-men of France or dogs of Spaniards? Then he read a letter from Admiral Coligny which he took to be an order to attack this same Admiral Pedro Menendez if he ventured within the dominions of New France. By sea, the distance was short and the route explored. It was the proper strategy. With a sudden blow we would capture or destroy the Spanish ships, and master the troops on shore before their companions upon the sea could arrive.

Laudonnière, having been superseded in his command, had no actual control in the matter, and though the Admiral spoke kindly to him and to the other officers, the orders were at once issued for the expedition. In order that there might be no possibility of miscarriage, the most of the available men of the Fort as well as of the ships were to be taken. Not only were all the officers and soldiers of the new expedition to go but also La Caille, Laudonnière's sergeant-major, his Ensign—Arlac, De Brésac a friend of La Caille, Ottigny, La Grange and the very pick of his men. [112]

This was little to my liking. With these men gone and Laudonnière ill, the Fort lay practically at the mercy of the enemy, were they Spaniards or Indians. The Sieur de la Notte would come upon the *Trinity* in spite of all that I could urge, for though not born to the command of men, he had a love for play with the steel and went where he felt his duty strongest.

I could not conceal my fears, even from the Vicomte de la Notte. All that was for me in this world would be left behind in a crumbling fort with no one to defend. Of those to remain, but seventeen men of Laudonnière and nine or ten of Ribault were in condition to bear arms, and some of these were servants, one of them being the Admiral's cook and two others his dog-boys. There was an old carpenter of threescore named Challeux, two shoemakers, an old cross-bow maker, a player upon the spinet and four valets—a beggarly array of fighting men surely to defend the one hundred and fifty women, children and camp-followers the Admiral would leave behind! I went to him, but he would not listen to me. His mind was made to carry out all these plans, he said; and so I left him. La Grange and Ottigny went to him again; but we saw that it was useless. I then sought Madame and Mademoiselle in their chamber in the living quarters. [113]

We had only a short time, but Mademoiselle and I went out upon the bastion and stood by the breeching of one of the cannon, looking out to sea. The air was close and sultry and not a breath stirred the trees to the back of us or rippled the surface of the river that flowed, deep and sluggish, below. The leaves, half turned in color and wet by a rain-storm during the night, hung sere and motionless. The standard above our heads hung closely about the staff, drooped and faded. The ships in the river were shaking out their sails, which fell heavily and hung from their yards in straight and listless folds to the deck. The men moved down from the Fort to the boats as though they had no joy in the undertaking. There was no gleam upon their breastpieces, for the sun did not shine that morning, and never the rollicking song that means so much to the man-at-arms. I was in no cheerful disposition, and there was a reflection of my mood in the manner of Mademoiselle.

"There is no great danger," I began, "and we will return within the week. I have asked your father to stay, as he can be of no great service in a culverin fight, or a fight of ships. But he will go."

"If there is a battle," she smiled, "it were difficult to keep him where the women and children are. He hath ever given a good account of himself." [114]

"Yes, Mademoiselle, but he should not go."

I said it in a tone so convincing that she looked at me to get my meaning. I had not meant to betray my uneasiness to her, but with her woman's wit she guessed my thought.

"You are thinking of us," she said quietly.

I did not answer. I looked down at the ground, tapping my boot with my scabbard.

"I know not what it is, Mademoiselle, but my mind is deep in melancholy."

She looked across to the pine barrens, sighing.

"It is the dying of the year or some movement of the elements," she replied.

"Yes, doubtless that is it."

And then we both sat silent again.

"Mademoiselle, you know that Don Diego de Baçan is there," I said at last, pointing to the southward. "If anything should happen that we do not return so soon as we expect, promise me that you will yourself cause a private watch to be kept at the gates of Fort Caroline. If there are signs of attack, go at once with Madame to the woods. Forgive me, Mademoiselle, for asking you to bear a part of my uneasiness, but there are not many wise heads at Fort Caroline."

She smiled a little at my eagerness.

"I have no fear of Diego de Baçan, or Menendez de Avilés," she replied, "but I will do as you wish." She then took from the breast of her gown a straight dagger, long and fine. As I looked at it a chill went over me and I held up my hands before my eyes. [115]

"Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle!" I cried in anguish.

She held the weapon poised a moment on her finger-tips looking at it strangely, then slowly set it in its sheath and returned it to her breast. I looked her in the eyes and they were calm. I knew that she would do as she meant. She stood straight as any one of Satouriona's warriors, smiling bravely at me, and I wished that I might take her in my arms and tell her all that I would before we parted. I looked up at her, my hands trembling to touch her, my eyes wide with adoration; and something came over her then that she knew how deep I loved her. For a great tear came to her eye and trickled down upon her cheek. But she brushed it away brusquely with the back of her hand. She thrust her fingers toward me, turning her head away; and I pressed them to my lips, kissing them blindly—blindly many times.

"God bless you, Mademoiselle!" I murmured.

Then I left her. That was the memory of Diane de la Notte I carried out to sea.

We entered pinnaces at about four of the afternoon and put out across the bar for the *Trinity*, which, swinging wide at her anchorage, rolled upon the glassy water, light as a feather. For the cargo was out of her and she sat high and proud, for all the world like a great swan. There was no air stirring and the surface of the sea was like oil,—I felt again the same ominous foreboding of impending evil. There had been a storm somewhere, for the waves rolled in and burst with a [116]

roar upon the beach below us. It was choppy over the bar, but beyond a wetting we got upon the ship safely enough. I liked not the looks of the sky and sea. Overhead the clouds hung dark and heavy, for though 'twas a full hour before sunset the sky was so gloomy that all the lanthorns below were lighted. We could see all around the horizon, for the air was most clear and the blue black line of it came strong against the coppery glow of the heavens to the east and southward. The sand upon the shore gleamed white by contrast against the dark green of the pines beyond, which cut across the sky-line so black that you could see with distinctness each particular needle and spur. The thunder of the surf was loud above the dip and murmur of the ship, and to the southward along the coast as far as the eye could reach the white lines of froth, growing smaller and smaller in the distance, rolled in from the outer bar.

It was no pleasant berth for a ship of our size upon a lee shore. She could not go into any of the rivers as the *Pearl* and the *Jesus* could, and I was for putting to sea at once, where in the open we could clew up everything and run for it if a storm were brewing. The Admiral and the Captain Bourdelais were upon the after-castle in conversation and looking at the sky or up the river toward the Fort, where the Captain La Grange, with one of the vessels of Laudonnière, still tarried. It was plain to be seen that they liked the looks of the weather no better than I, for in a little while orders were passed forward to secure everything for sea, and the anchor was hove up to a short cable. Before dark La Grange appeared, and as a light breeze had sprung up, signals were flashed and we put out to sea under all plain sail. As soon as the sheets had been trimmed aft and the course had been set down the coast, I took a lanthorn and lay below decks with one of the midship's men of the watch to see that all was secure in the hold and cabins. [117]

When I went under the half deck and opened the hatch to the quarters of the men, a cloud of blue smoke rolled out and I thought there must be a fire. There, upon a sea-chest, sitting most disconsolate, was my Englishman, Job Goddard. Around him in a half-moon was a crowd of the French bowmen and arquebusiers holding their sides and laughing at his plight. For while I looked he put his hand upon his stomach, retching and groaning like a person ill unto death. [118]

"Why, how now, Job Goddard," I laughed—for the ship was pitching—"is this your maiden voyage?"

But Goddard only bent the further forward, and the bowmen laughed the more. At this I feared 'twas serious, for Goddard was no man to be laughed at by any Frenchman.

I went over to him and clapped my hand upon his shoulder. "Chut, man," said I half angrily, "what is it? Speak up!"

And with that he turned toward me the sorriest look and wryest face I have ever beheld upon mortal man. But he made no sign that he heard me or indeed that he was aware of my presence, only gripping his middle and groaning the louder. I made a shrewd guess that 'twas no vital sickness that had come upon him, and remembering how I had once before seen a man cured of some such an ailment, without further ado I fetched him a resounding whack upon the thigh.

I had not counted upon so speedy a recovery, for I had scarce time to spring behind him when he flew into the air and in the very thick of the Frenchmen—striking this way and that with feet and hands, until two of the arquebusiers measured their length upon the floor and the rest of them were flying in all directions before the fury of his onslaught. Unable longer to restrain myself I burst into a fit of laughter, which even my sense of authority could not withhold. [119]

It was not until then that Goddard espied me. His countenance fell and he looked around him as though to gather his wits. But in a moment he walked over to his sea-chest, and I saw that he had been sucking upon one of these tobacco reeds which Vasseur had described to me. He looked at the packet and bowl a moment stupidly and then, with a sudden motion, dashed them upon the deck, where they broke into a hundred pieces.

Then and not until then would he speak.

"Blow me, sir," said he, "if I bean't sick at me stomick." The expression of his face at this unaccustomed sensation was so comical that I could not blame the Frenchmen, and I laughed as loud as the best of them.

The next morning when within but two leagues of San Augustin the wind fell again to the same dead, sluggish calm of the day before, and we could make no progress; but plain to the naked eye behind the sand spit at the entrance showed the vessels of the Spaniards, where they had anchored to receive us.

The weather by now was growing thicker and thicker, and in an hour we saw that a squall would strike us. We had barely time to get our canvas in when down it came with great force and away we rode trying to bear up against it. Close as we hauled we could not get to the harbor and give battle; and so the Admiral, seeing that some of the smaller vessels would be blown ashore, signaled for all to follow, and under storm-sails stood off until the tempest should abate. Had we held on so close to that lee shore some of our vessels must surely have fallen into the hands of the Spaniards. [120]

But the storm showed no sign of abating. Before noon the wind increased to such a force that the vessels could wear but their very lightest canvas; and heavy gusts of wind came now and then, in which those sails cracked and strained, the ship groaning like a thing in pain.

Bourdelais stood upon the poop glancing first at the slatting canvas and then at the Spanish vessels within the harbor, growing every moment more indistinct in the wrack and mist under our lee. De Brésac, who had stood fingering his sword-hilt impatiently, awaiting the beginning of the battle, had railed so openly at the Admiral's decision to put to sea, that he had been sent

below, like a sulky boy, to recover his usual tepor. Salvation Smith had stopped reading to Job Goddard from the "Martyrs,"—his accustomed relish before going into battle—and sat moody and dispirited in the lee of the barge in the waist, while his companion swore softly to himself.

[121]

I doubted not, it was a wise decision to put to sea, but to me it seemed a bitter thing to be forced to turn aside from a battle which meant so much to us all. If Ribault himself had any doubts as to his decision, he did not show them; for he paced up and down the quarter-deck, his calm demeanor setting a worthy example in forbearance to the younger and less moderate among us, who were anxious to be up and at our enemies, and found small pleasure in a sailing drill upon the ocean when other and more troublous business might have been doing.

The next day the wind went down. From green the sea had turned to gray. But the waves did not break in masses of foam. They boiled along, churning and seething as though disturbed by some mighty current beneath. Only the crest, in a wall of amber thin as parchment, was tossed up to curl and break in a jet of spray; and broken lines of gray swayed and rolled athwart the trough where the foam had been. The clouds from brown had turned to a heavy blue, the color of a Spanish blade. They hung low and menacing, while great fingers of them curled and twisted like furies, or shot out in long lines here and there to be torn to pieces and carried in shreds down to leeward.

For six days this weather continued. There was no great danger to the ships so long as it blew no harder. The Admiral was running around this mounthoun, as he called it, which came up from the south. Could we but go through it, all danger would be past; but in this sea it would have been destruction to some of his fleet to have hazarded an approach to San Augustin again. We could get no sight of clear sky; but by the drift and speed I made it that we had gone three hundred leagues or so to the north and into the Mares' sea, as it has come to be called.

[122]

Here we saw no longer the great rollers of the coast, for the wind now blew fitfully from the east and the waves ran first in one way and then in another. The sky lightened a little and the Admiral, thinking the storm had gone out to sea, shifted his helm and put about again.

The Sieur de la Notte, who was chafing under this delay, could hardly restrain his great anxiety. The Spaniards had seen us struggling in the face of the storm and might conceive the bold project to attack Fort Caroline before the ships returned. The very thought of it filled my heart with dread, and I could not forbear speaking of it to Ribault.

That was the only time I had ever seen him angry. He flashed upon me, his features distorted with rage. He had seized a pin from the rail and I thought for the moment he would strike me with it.

"You Anglais are always meddling," he shouted. "What have you to do with this command?"

[123]

But I did not move. I looked at him squarely and some one took the pin away from him; then he went below.

It was plain to see, none the less, that the situation of the French and the Spanish had changed. Here were we, many leagues upon the ocean, at the mercy of the winds and seas; while the Spaniards, our deadliest enemies, outnumbering us two to one, were ashore, and but two days' march from all we had in New France—all the most of us had anywhere upon the face of the earth!

Would we never come to land again? And, Mademoiselle!

I dared not think!

CHAPTER X. THE HERICANO.

[124]

We were sailing toward the shore again, but the wind had gone down and the *Trinity* moved sluggishly enough through the heavy swells, making scarce a league an hour. But this was a humor of the elements and meant nothing—or everything. In those latitudes a ship-master should ever be in a plague and torment.

It was three weeks that we had been upon the sea, when one night, at the beginning of October, four of the ships still being in company, there broke a storm, the equal of which I have never had the ill-fortune to behold. And it was afterwards told me by Indians of Emola that never had there been known such a tempest upon that coast.

The Lieutenant Bachasse had the watch on deck. I was standing by his side. Suddenly far down on the starboard quarter we heard a roaring like that of the surf upon the shore; only it was a hundred times greater and had in it something more ominous and terrible. The sky was black as soot in that direction, and though we peered through the darkness we could see nothing there. More and more distinct it grew, and then we could make out a line of white growing more plain with each second. Bachasse was giving some hoarse orders to have the sails and yards lowered, when the Admiral rushed from his cabin clad only in shirt and breeches.

[125]

"Dieu nous bénisse!" he shouted. "It is the hericano! Set her stern to it, mes gars, for your lives!"

I knew what he meant and rushing to the starboard tiller rope, caught the slack from the hand of the man who stood there and ran it through the pulley with all the strength and quickness I could muster. I jammed it far over and hung on like death.

Amid the deafening noise, with the ripping and slatting of the sails, the threshing of the ropes and pollys, and the roaring of the sea above it all, I could not think. I hung blindly to the tackle, loosing and easing her as she felt the helm. I saw the main topsail which had been reefed down, torn out of its ropes and go flying entire like a great bird in the air, where it vanished in the wrack and mist. Then the faces blew out of the lanthorns, hitting and cutting us like needles, and we were in darkness. I could dimly make out the figures of the Admiral, Bourdelais, and several others as they hung to the tackling at the mizzen. I saw them put hand to mouth as though shouting, but could hear no sound other than the thundering of wind and sea. [126]

The first shock had caught the ship fairly upon her stern. Her nose had gone well down into the smother, for I felt the poop rise high in the air as though she were going all way over. Then she fell back into the depths with a blow that seemed to shake loose every joint and elbow in her hull. A wave many feet high dashed over, washing forward into the waist the man at my side and carrying overboard everything that was not lashed to the rail or mast. One of the lanthorns came down with a crash, just missing me where I swung to the tiller-polly, and swept down the slant of the after-castle, carrying away the hand-rail of the mounting ladder and vanishing into the quarter-deck.

The ship swayed and yawed frightfully from this side to that. It was a moment fraught with dreadful anxiety. The great tiller was smashing into the bulwarks and pounding back against the tackle, and it seemed for a moment as though the ship would fall into the trough. With great difficulty I reached the larboard tackle and hand over hand gathered the slack of it in until both gearings pulled alternately so that she seemed to be going aright. These tackles I passed through a ring-bolt to ease the strain, which pulled me this way and that like a rope yarn. It was desperate work keeping the feet; for with the great seas coming aboard over the quarter and the swaying of the top hamper from side to side I should have been thrown overboard a dozen times but for the gripe upon the tiller tackle. From the trough, the ship with a sickening motion rose high into the air as though shot from a saker; and then the deck fell away under the feet as she was thrust forward by the mighty rush of wind and wave behind her. Those great leaps were twice the length of the *Trinity* herself, for we could not have been going at a less rate than fifteen leagues an hour. Before long there was a great crash up aloft and the fore topmast was carried away, bringing down the fore and main top gallant yards. There came a pounding that jarred the ship grievously, but by God's Providence the wreckage tore away and went by the board. [127]

And yet it was most wonderful! I strained and sweated at the tiller, all hot with the work, though the spray was cutting my face like hail and I could feel the sting of the rain-drops even through my doublet. We were going to the westward now—to Fort Caroline perhaps, and I cared not how hard it blew. The spirit of the storm entered into me and I was drunk—drunk with the speed and motion, and mad with the struggle. The strain upon endurance was great; but there came a feeling of the glory of it, and as I fought on I prayed that no one might reach me. I set my teeth till my jaws throbbed and throbbed again, while my eyes watched the glow of the mass of foam forward as the water dashed up and over the bows, at times completely hiding the forward part of the ship. [128]

I do not know how long I struggled there alone. It may have been ten minutes—it may have been an hour. But by and by I made out several figures crawling along the larboard bulwarks, seizing hold upon any rigging that came within their reach. They were the Admiral, Job Goddard and one other. When they could stand upright, Goddard and a seaman took hold upon the tackles, thus relieving me of a part of the strain. Then, in a while, Bachasse came up from below, saying that the ship was taking water both forward and aft and was creaking piteously.

Matters were bad enough, for we could not be far from the coast. Unless the wind veered to the north, nothing could save us from the breakers. The topsails had been blown to ribbons and the seas would have set us on our beam ends or the wind would have overset us completely had we tried to put the ship on the wind. And so we flew on, the *Trinity* leaping every moment nearer to her death, the waves dashing over and around her, sure of their prey.

Goddard swinging to his tackle leaned over till his mouth was next my ear shouting, [129]

"'Tis a fine speed for enterin' Paradise, Master Sydney!"

All the night long we stood there, having now and then a relief of four men upon the tackles, the officers for the most part moving at their places of duty and saying what they could of good cheer to the men. The Sieur de la Notte came up toward dawn and asked Captain Bourdelais what the chances were. He being a person of few words replied shortly, "The ship will be upon the beach in three hours."

Never had I seen the ocean wear so frightful a mien as when the long night came at last to an end. There was a gray waste about us and one could see no color anywhere; the ocean was like the dead ashes of a fire. At night we had not been able to see; we could only feel the great motion, and accustom ourselves. But by light of day the *Trinity* seemed but a speck upon those waves. At one moment, high as our top-hamper was, upon all sides we could see nothing but great walls of water, tumbling down upon us; the next we would look over abysses which were bottomless, out across a waste of foam which seemed to mingle and war with the cloud flakes that fell down upon it.

Among the soldiers there was great fear; for they had no stomach for such business as this. [130]

Even the seamen, many of them hardy in service, had lost their wits completely. Once when a wave had come aboard an old boatswain dashed terror-stricken into the half-deck and fore-castle shouting,

"The cabin is stove in,—we are sinking!" and three arquebusiers crazy with fear jumped overboard. One of the fine gentry of the cabin, with a satin coat, came running wild-eyed from below and falling upon his knees threw his hands in the air raving that should he reach land he would be no more a Lutheran, but a good Catholic, as he always was.

Providence intervened, for a sea struck him fairly in the face and he, having no hold—by reason of his hands being up—was upset backwards and vanished with a shriek. Salvation Smith disappeared, and came upon deck again dressed in a suit of black which he had taken from some half-dead gentleman in the cabin, "to go before the Holy Trinity in a fitting manner," as he solemnly said. Another seaman, getting most drunk upon *eau de vie* ran amuck with a pike, maiming and hurting several.

It was about two hours of the morning watch when the waves seemed to grow suddenly less in length; and though the wind still roared as fiercely as ever, and the foam flew by us in scattering flakes or lashed furiously against the masts and shrouds, it was plain to be seen we were coming into the shallows. The *Trinity* moved more steadily, and that showed the better the great speed at which we were making for the beach. The wrack and the spume hid everything ahead, but I thought in a moment I could mark a white jet here and there which showed where the breakers were. Bourdelais saw them too, for he rushed to the tiller-tackles. The Admiral stood at the break of the poop, calm and quiet as though at a sailing drill, ready to set the bows straight for the beach when the end was near. The tackle crew were straining at the tiller watching the yawing of the ship and the motions of the hands of Bourdelais as he gave the course.

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Suddenly out of the mist ahead I saw a line of white, leaping and writhing as far as the eye could reach to starboard and larboard; and then another beyond it, rolling onward. We came up to them and were soon in the midst of the seething, churning mass of white as the *Trinity* went pounding over the outer bar. She hung there a moment, reluctant; and then dashed forward again like a poor desperate creature hunted by the hounds, with a great straining leap. Everything was white about us now, and we had barely time to note the yellow strip of the beach under the bows, when with pitiful tremble and a quiver that went through her, bow and stern, the poor ship took her death blow with a dreadful crash and brought up hard and fast upon the sands.

The white tongues of surf licked her sides greedily, and sea after sea made clean breaches over bows and waist as though impatient to engulf her. So fairly and fast had we struck that the waves which followed us did not at first swing her broadside to the beach. But at last the drag of the wreck of the spars to larboard, added to the stress of the wind, pulled her around and we swung high up completely wrecked.

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We were in bad case. Now we could plainly see the line of the beach with its backing of brown sand grasses and here and there a patch of dark where the gnarled firs and bay trees grew sparsely in the dunes.

The wrack and spray were flying thick, and the great waves behind drove completely over the vessel, wedging her farther up and making her destruction more certain. Yet one thing we noted. There were no rocks or reefs; only the long line of gently shelving beach. It seemed that with care we might all be saved; but there was not a moment to be lost. Bachasse went below again, with a carpenter, and found the hold turned into a small sea, which had flowed over the provision lockers and buried them under six feet of water. The surges were washing this way and that and seemed like to rend the timbers apart. Already a sea, larger than the others, had torn off one of the quarter galleries, and this wreckage had floated up on the beach, where it lay in the drift of the spent sea.

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No boats could swim in that surf. So a most fearless young Frenchman, called Brunel, sprang into the waves with a rope about his body and struck out for the shore. It was not far to the shallows, and but for the anger of the waves it would have been an easy passage. We watched the swimmer borne along; now he was carried ahead shoreward in the very cap of a wave, and then he was swept back in the hollow toward the ship. It was a fine struggle. Twice he disappeared, and we thought he must have gone; but in a moment a great wave took him and bore him well onward in its topping of foam. Then he was up to his shoulders in the brine, fighting desperately for a foothold. Soon we saw him rise and work his way to the dry beach, where he fell and lay exhausted.

But after a little space he rose, waving his hands, and ropes were attached to his line. These Brunel hauled ashore and made fast to trees among the sand hills. Over these other men went, hand over hand; and soon two pollys with their tackling were traveling back and forth carrying the company ashore, many of them bearing their armor and accoutrements.

The work had been done none too speedily. A dozen or so of the company remained on the ship when we heard below decks the creaking of the timbers as the bolts pulled out and split them apart. Captain Bourdelais now urged the Admiral to go ashore; he would not, saying that none should leave after him,—a matter which Bourdelais and Bachasse disputed. There they stood with their hands on their hearts, all three bowing to one another as though at some fine levee of the Court. I had no humor for this business, for 'twas no place for foot-scraping. I was minded to get ashore without further ado, and so sprang to the tackle, which I hitched about my body. I had no more than done so when there was a great crashing and the deck suddenly fell away under my

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CHAPTER XI.

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WHAT BEFELL US UPON THE SAND-SPIT.

Down I went, the water roaring about my ears and my body pulled this way and that by the undertow which swept me fiercely up and down. I opened my eyes, but the surf was full of foam and sand, so I closed them. I felt that I was being borne out to sea, and scarce had the mind to continue the struggle. Then came a sudden wrench. For a moment I thought I must have been crushed among the timbers, and to this day have often wondered that it was not so. But the strain was steady and then relaxed and I remembered the rope which I had put about me and knew it was the taughtening of the tackle about my shoulders. As my body touched the sandy bottom, with a mighty effort and springing upward I reached the surface, bewildered and all but exhausted. About, in all directions, were tossing pieces of the wreckage. I reached a spar with difficulty and to it clung, warding off meanwhile as best possible the planks and gratings which were dashing all around. I saw five or six men floating near and among them to my great joy marked the figure of the Admiral, clinging to a spar. He saw me at the same moment and feebly raised a hand in acknowledgment. Fearing he might lose his hold, and watching my chance, I swam to him and set him astride the yard. He seemed to have no will or power of his own and I thought he must have been badly injured.

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"Are you much hurt, monsieur?" I asked him while I struggled to raise him. He made no great effort to aid me and would have toppled over again had I not held him firmly.

"I do not know, my friend," he replied, "and I care not."

Then I discovered there was a cut upon the back of his head, which was bleeding freely, dyeing his linen and doublet a sombre hue and marking in greater contrast the pallor of his face.

"Be of good cheer," I said as cheerfully as I might, "we will be ashore in a moment, sir." By the tackle about me, we were presently hauled through the surf and reached the shallows, where a dozen arms plucked us from our hazardous hold and landed us high upon the beach.

The perils of the last two days, ending in the position into which we were thrown, had taken my thoughts from the desperate fear at my heart. Until then—until we were surely wrecked and saw all destroyed before our eyes, we had hoped at least to get back to Fort Caroline before the Spaniards could attack. I made no doubt they would do that at the earliest moment if indeed they had not done so already.

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My God! For the first time the horrible chances came upon and overwhelmed me. Wrecked and ruined upon an unknown and barren coast with the Indians on one side and the Spaniards perhaps barring our way to Fort Caroline and Mademoiselle! I was weak and could not bear to think more. The horror of it overcame me! I rose to my feet and strode up the beach like one distraught, breasting the flying sand and peering fruitlessly through the mist, vainly searching for some familiar mark to judge of our whereabouts. The motion of struggling against the wind seemed to lessen the dreadful ferment of mind; and bare-handed and worn as I was, no wish remained except only to press onward to Mademoiselle, or learn that she was safe. Once above the roaring of the storm I heard a sound like the cry of a woman and, with heart a-leap started running with all my might. But it was only some shrill creature which swirled near on the wind, uttering its storm-cry. On I struggled, heat and fever making riot of thought, until I fell again exhausted to the beach. I remember closing my eyes, but the eyeballs swam in a red mist and burned so that I opened them again. Then I seemed to sleep and dream. I saw dimly a woman seated at a table in a room. Back of her and around her were many men in armor, and their hands and faces were streaked with the red. It was Mademoiselle! By her side, leaning forward toward her, was a man, his eyes swimming as he gazed and his white teeth gleaming hatefully through his beard. He had a mug upraised, from which the liquor was spilling about as he pledged her, laughing coarsely the while. I could hear him too; for there was a gruesome reality about it. The others watched amused. He reached toward her, and I saw her shrink to a corner, away. He came again. She took a dagger from her bosom. Then drew herself up cold, white, and set, the weapon in both hands at her heart. No one moved. They stood, those men in armor, their hands raised, like statues. There was silence, deadly and oppressive; and I was dumb too and could make no sound. Then everything grew red again and I saw no more. In my agony I dug my nails deep into the sand and I cried aloud, calling to God. It was not so! It could not be so! I was mad! Yes, yes,—I knew that I was mad, and that comforted me.

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By and by—it was a long while—for the clouds had broken and the light of the sun had gone high in the heavens—I grew better and stronger and got upon my feet. Cold and wet, the wind cut sharp as a knife, but the fever had gone, and I laughed aloud to think of the fool I had been. The situation was hopeless enough, but we were strong men, many of us bearing weapons and armor, and much might be done. When the storm abated the other ships would put in and take us aboard. All would yet be well. Even if the ships did not come we would make a forced march through the backwoods, persuading friendly Indians to guide and aid us. We might not be far—perhaps only half a dozen leagues from Fort Caroline.

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I went back down the beach the wind at my back, warming with the new impulse until I was

soon running again. I found I had gone near a league to the northward, and it was many minutes before I was back among the company. They had moved behind the sand dunes the better to find shelter from the wind. Fires had been kindled and around these they huddled wretchedly, drying their clothing. There was nothing to eat save a few biscuits which had been washed up in a cask, and these were salt-soaked and unpleasing to the taste. Some of the men had gone down the beach, where they found some ledges of moss and rock and brought back a few shell-fish. These they ate raw from the shells; but I was not hungry and they seemed unsightly to me, so I could find no stomach for them.

When I came up La Caille, the sergeant-major, approached.

"Well, sir," he asked, "what do you find? Is San Augustin to the north or the south?"

"To the north, I should say. But there is nothing but sand and sea so far as the eye can reach." He turned to De Brésac gloomily and together they walked in the direction from which I had come.

Admiral Ribault sat upon the sand, a rag binding his temples, his head bent forward upon his breast, the very presentment of misery. I went to him and tried to say a few words of good cheer. But a deep melancholy had settled upon the man, and he looked down at the sand, saying nothing. I could see that he was in no condition to speak upon any subject. I felt, God knows, keen as he the desperate plight in which we found ourselves. Yet, now that I had come to myself, I knew that sighing would not mend the matter and so went among the officers and cavaliers for counsel. These I found to be in as grievous a spirit as their Admiral. Broken in spirit and sore in body, they felt horribly the loneliness and the failure at the very beginning of a project into which they had ventured all. By and by, Job Goddard and Salvation Smith, who had gone down the beach on a voyage of discovery, returned to the camp. They had come upon two Indians and learned that San Augustin was fourteen leagues to the northward.

"I bade them stay with us for dinner to-day, Master Sydney," said Goddard, cheerfully, "but they had no stomach for truffles of shell-fish and wet biscuit. The heathen scut! They fled to the woods as though the fiend was after them. Salvation Smith fired at them with an arquebus, but they vanished among the trees unscathed. Salvation has a better knowledge of the pike than of the arquebus, sir."

That apostle of the Martyrs stood by, looking ruefully at the weapon he held in his hand.

"True, sir," said he at last, "'tis a toy for women and lads. Give me a pike or a shaft and a good yew-bow and I warrant our invitations will not be so scorned another time."

We were to the southward then! That was no pleasant information, for Menendez lay between us and the River of May; and the Indians, doubtless those of Outina, at war with the friendly Satouriona, would lose no time in letting the Spaniards know of our whereabouts and condition. Some of the gentlemen went into the forest, but came back cut by the brambles, saying they saw no beasts nor food of any kind and that they could not penetrate a rod into the thicket; we should starve before receiving any aid from that quarter. Of one thing I was soon convinced,—we could not lie long upon the beach our mouths agape with hunger and thirst. And many more of us feeling the same cravings, among them Bachasse, Arlac, De Brésac and La Caille,—late that night we persuaded the Admiral to set out upon a march up the beach.

Many things save food had been brought upon the shore, among them two trumpets, drums and two standards. And so at dawn of the next day with waving banners and beating drums, with some show of gaiety and a martial spirit—though famished—we set forth to the northward. Ribault, who walked with the rear-guard, turned at the last to where the timbers of the *Trinity* were scattered down the shore as far as the eye could reach. He had grown ten years older in the night and walked with Bourdelais and the Sieur de la Notte, the mere shadow of the man he had been at the Fort and upon the ship. By and by some of the Huguenots set up a martial hymn, which all the gentlemen sang with a fine good will and rhythm, keeping the cadence of the march. That seemed to put new life into them. They were like children and, drawing their swords, began looking to their weapons and jesting at the chances of the good fight which might soon be. They manfully tightened their girths to stay their hunger and each vied with the other in good humor and courage. But in the afternoon one man, a great burly calker, threw up his hands and then fell down dead. They said his heart had rotted.

It was a desperate expedition, and the reflection of the Admiral's melancholy, in spite of some flashes of good cheer, was seen in the eyes of all who knew the obstacles before us. Any man with half a seaman's eye could tell that any storm that had wrecked the *Trinity* could not fail to beach the other vessels; and few of us believed that we would be saved by them. If we could but find a break in the impenetrable forest and strike inland we might prey upon the Indians and so by an easy detour at last reach the Fort. Perhaps Menendez had put to sea again in the hope of finding us storm-beaten and unprepared for battle. If he had done this we might come quickly upon his fort at the lodge of Seloy, and by audacity and rapidity compass what mere strength or force of numbers might not effect.

This was my hope, and the Admiral took great heart when it was spoken to him. We would know upon the morrow. In the afternoon the storm-clouds blew away and the wind went down. The ocean still lashed the beach sullenly, but the horizon clouds to the eastward were tinged with pink, and with the prospect of fair weather there was much happiness. More shell-fish were found, the moisture of which cooled the palate, though the taste was unpleasing, and the saltiness made one long the more for fresh water and food. At about sunset we passed around a point of land and abruptly came upon the timbers of a vessel. The beams were split and the

yellow of the splinters showed most plainly that she had been recently wrecked. A bit of the stern piece of a pinnacle was found, which bore the name of the *Gloire* and then we knew that others of the French fleet shared our fate. In a little while we made an abrupt turn and came upon more wreckage and a large party of our shipwrecked comrades.

The worst that we had expected had happened. The French fleet was no more! I glanced at Jean Ribault. His face was pale as death, and when he saw these men before him his under-lip dropped and his mouth fell open, his eyes expressing the bitterness of soul he could not contain. He stopped short and let his head fall forward. His muscles loosened and I thought he would have fallen. But at the touch of the *Sieur de la Notte* at his elbow, he straightened again and casting his eyes heavenward, said tremblingly, "The will of God be done!"

But all of Ribault's officers were not discouraged. Indeed upon the sight of so large a company many of the men and soldiers took great heart again and cried joyously to one another. The men we had found were sailors of the *Gloire*, who had elected to remain together upon the beach, until sighted by some French ship while the main body of their company had gone northward. Others were of the *Petit-Jean* and of the *Jesus*, which had gone ashore leagues below. We numbered now three hundred and fifty persons, and but for our hunger and the smallness of the supply of powder and ball would have been a formidable little army indeed. Captain Cosette of the *Gloire*, who was there, embraced the Admiral with great joy, and Bourdelais commanded a halt, for the men of the *Trinity* were tired out. Many of them dropped to the ground, and, forgetting their hunger and their thirst fell mercifully into a deep sleep in which they were left to rest.

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I seemed to have no further sensation—even of weariness. Quiet was more irksome to me than aught else. I could not remain seated like the others but must walk up and down upon the sand. And yet I was not in a fever as before. It was easier for me to think thus upon my feet. I felt myself most calm in mind and could not understand how it should be so when every new discovery went to confirm the premonition of the doom that had hung over us like a pall since that day—years ago it seemed—when I had bade farewell to Mademoiselle upon the bastion at Fort Caroline. It all came back upon me as some dream, the stifling atmosphere, the ominous elements, the listlessness of all things human and animate upon the earth, and the misery which took the joy from those last words with my love. Then I thought of those red sunsets upon the ocean, when we had sat upon the fore-castle laughing at our ill omens and watched the great ball of fire drop down into the purple mists of the hot western sea. Such a sun there was this night—I mounted a sand hill that I might see it the better. A yellow mist rose from a swamp somewhere inland and the disk grew to a greater size than I had ever seen. Yet one could look at it squarely ere it had come to the horizon, for it was not bright and seemed not to be shining at all; only a great ball of blood poised in the air, which one might almost reach out and pluck from the sky. Then it fell down behind a line of barren pine trees at the horizon, which cut across it cold and clear as prison bars,—and in a moment was gone.

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When I went back the officers of the *Trinity* and some of the other gentlemen had lit a fire and sat in a circle upon the sand. A council of war was held. The wilder blades were for pushing on at once. Bourdelais stood up and on behalf of the Admiral, said he, "We must be patient. To-morrow we will know something."

"Bah!" said Arlac, angrily, "you speak of patience as though it were water or sand or anything that is easy to have. What will you know to-morrow? Sacré! Speak to us of food, if you please. Bigre! We're hungry I tell you."

"Yes," growled others, "we starve. Let us die fighting at any rate."

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Some of the more moderate wished to wait until the dawn, that the men could sleep and so be fresh against any new adversity on the morrow. Others were for a rest until midnight and then a quick march to the mainland; for we did not doubt that we were on one of the many promontories which in these parts jut up and down the coast for long distances. For my part I asked nothing better than to move quickly, to the northward, or westward or which ever way would bring us soonest to our journey's ending. So, at midnight we set forth again, the men moving uncomplaining.

By four of the morning, it being still dark, those of the company who were in advance came to a sudden halt. In a moment we were all at a standstill, peering out into the darkness over a body of water. It was a channel or sluice, through which the tide was running strongly into the sea. The line of the beach took a turn sharply to the left and follow it as we might there was no chance to gain our way to the mainland.

Across the channel from time to time we fancied we could make out the twinkling of lights, small like stars; but whether they were glow-flies or lights of lanthorns or fires upon a distant beach we could not discover. Men were at once set to work building large rafts out of small trees, upon which when day dawned we might make our way across this channel. Slowly the dawn came up out of the sea, and a faint glow spread over the sky overhead, turning it to a color deep and fathomless. One by one the lines of foam on the bar came out of the darkness until the sea was dark against the lightening sky and the stars grew fainter in the glow of coming day. It was cool and frosty—the freshness of something new begun, and the dry grasses behind us were trembling together in the morning breeze. Never did the spur of new-born day find such ready response. For the blithe Frenchmen, hungry as they were, answering readily to the crisp call of the dawn, set about putting their weapons to rights and gathered together in their companies in fine fettle.

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By and by we could plainly see the low-lying beach of a shore not far distant across the channel. We seemed on a kind of cape or sand-spit, for the bay lay far around to the left and was lost in the angle of the sand dunes. There were sand dunes there, across this channel, in plenty too and bushes and hills higher than those we had passed. The sergeant-major, La Caille, the Chevalier de Brésac, and Bachasse came and stood by me, waiting until we could clearly make out the line of the coast.

Presently, upon a hill, outlined clear against the sky, his arquebus upon his shoulder and his breastpieces and helmet catching the first glint of the morning light, a soldier appeared. I fancied that my mind had played my eyes some trick. But the sergeant-major saw him at the same time; and in a moment there followed two, three, five figures who stood besides the first one pointing at us and waving their arms.

Were they friends or enemies—Protestants or Catholics? I strained my eyes to find in their garb or manner some familiar sign.

We had not long to wait, for in a moment other soldiers appeared from behind the hills and out on the air there floated the ominous standard of Spain.

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CHAPTER XII.

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TRUCE.

La Caille started and his cry was echoed from one end of the camp to the other. Officers and men, aroused by the commotion, started up, seizing their weapons, running here and there in bewilderment. The trumpets blared and there was a clanking of steel as the sick and starving men gladly arrayed themselves in the ranks of battle. Ribault, aroused for the moment by the martial sounds and sights, marched before the company, his eyes flashing and his sword bare, giving orders in so inspiring a way that the men took great heart and stood strong and reliant. The arquebusiers loaded their pieces and at an order from their captains, marched down the beach to the end of the sand-spit opposite the Spaniards, where they grounded their arms and waited.

But regardless of this warlike show upon our part, the Spaniards made no move to show their numbers or intentions. Many more men appeared upon the hills and others to the number of three-score or more came out of the bushy hollows between the sand dunes and stood unconcerned looking across at us. There seemed something portentous in this calmness and confidence, and this notion of mine was not quieted by the subsequent actions of the Spanish officers. For three or four of them came upon the beach and arm in arm walked calmly up and down, talking together, while their men sat themselves upon the ground and ate their morning meal.

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This calmness of the enemy had its effect upon the companies of the Frenchmen. We could easily see that, sick, hungry and weak as we were, our men could prove no match for these hardy Biscayans, with the confidence born of full bellies and continued good fortune. Our men stood nervously, their hands to their waistbands and their eyes starting from their sunken sockets as they saw these gluttons across the channel contentedly munch their biscuits and drink some steaming stuff which was brought them in a great iron pot from the camp among the hills. The hunger, which during the two days had been reduced to a dull gnawing at the vitals and a general weakness of mind and body, now at the sight of this steaming potage, suddenly became most keen and poignant. As I looked, my mouth opened and my tongue came out from my lips. "Ventre bleu!" shouted De Brésac. "They tantalize us. It is not to be borne."

Job Goddard, who was one of my company of seamen, made no concealment of his suffering, and leaned upon his pike with both hands, craning his neck, his mouth and eyes wide distended. Then without a word—which was the surer sign of his madness—and without changing his gaze or expression, he threw down his weapon and walked forward out of the ranks, down the beach toward the Spaniards, and into the water until the surface rose over his head. None among us had a notion of his intention until he came up sputtering, for he could not swim, drifting seaward with the tide. He must surely have been drowned had not one of the company fastened upon him from one of the rafts with a boat-hook.

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Ribault then set the men at rest and called a conference of the officers, at which it was quickly decided to raise a white flag and call for a parley with those in authority among the Spaniards. A white shirt was thereupon fastened to a staff, and La Caille, the sergeant-major, went out upon a raft in plain sight of the enemy, waving this standard to and fro. Presently an officer emerged from the bushes on the other shore, replying. Then La Caille raising his voice so that it echoed plainly among the distant sand hills, shouted,

"We are Frenchmen,—company of Jean Ribault, Admiral of France. If you would parley, send an envoy."

There was a pause before the answer came. In our ranks, so great was the interest, no word was spoken.

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Then we heard in a harsh, commanding voice,

"You have a raft. Come yourselves!"

But the raft would have been of little avail in the current of this channel. So Brunel, the valiant swimmer who had gone first ashore from the *Trinity*, swam quickly to the opposite side, and seeing a canoe which lay there, entered it and paddled back to us unmolested. La Caille presently returned with him to the Spaniards as an envoy from the Admiral. We saw La Caille, who feared nothing, directly approach a group of the officers among the bushes, whom we could make out by reason of the swords they carried. These he saluted, and one in a cloak arose and acknowledged him courteously. Then he sat down and talked with them.

Ribault meanwhile had gone back among the dunes, where many of those most religiously inclined had fallen upon their knees in prayer. It was not proper that he should have left the front of his command when a mission so delicate as this was trembling in the balance. It is not my desire to belittle the use of prayer at any time; since, if meet and fitting, such petitions are frequently heard, and the great God is very good. But it was little like this gallant man to give a public sign of his doubts to cope with any questions or adversaries. And such, perhaps, a prayer would not have been had not all his actions since the wrecking of the *Trinity* shown a timidity unaccountable. A great gloom had fallen upon those petitioners, but there were few of us who had not come under its ban. By and by they sang a hymn. The melancholy cadences rolled and echoed from one sand hill to another, until the sound sunk deep into our souls and made us weak and womanish. So dispirited were my men that I perforce gave out a few sharp orders of discipline, and so set them to rights.

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The face of La Caille wore no great signs of encouragement as he returned. The Admiral met him upon the beach as the canoe touched the shore.

"Is it—?" he began.

"It is Menendez de Avilés, the Adelantado," said La Caille gravely.

"And his force?"

"Many hundreds, I should judge, your Excellency; so disposed that progress in this direction is impossible."

Ribault put his hand to his brow as though a great pain were at his temples. "I thought as much," he said.

La Caille went on. "I am bidden tell your Excellency that if you should desire to speak with this Spaniard you may go with four or six companions, and he pledges his word you shall come back safe."

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Ribault was in a great ferment of spirit. But he could not doubt that what the sergeant-major said was true, and so he called the Ensign Arlac, the Sieur de la Notte and myself, who with La Caille, De Brésac and one other entered the canoe and paddled to the opposite shore.

Upon our approach Menendez de Avilés arose, and with two officers and a priest walked down upon the beach to meet us. He stood very erect and bore his hand lightly upon the hilt of his sword. A black cloak thrown around his shoulders half hid his mouth and chin, but for all that I could mark the sinister smile and cruel lips, the sight of which had been burnt into my memory as I lay weak and helpless in the dungeon at Dieppe. His chaplain, De Solis, was at his heels. The officers were not ill-favored, only servile and full of fear of him. All four bowed low, doffing their morions and sweeping them to the Admiral, who acknowledged the courtesy in kind. Many compliments upon the reputation of each of these men were passed by the other, and it might have been thought that they were rather new-found friends than the deadliest enemies of their generation in this poor world.

De Avilés came well prepared to treat with starving men. He led us up to the bushes and bidding us be seated, caused wine and preserved fruits to be placed before us. Though it had seemed I had no mind to eat, we all partook of these things with great avidity. Were there great events to come, it were better, I thought, to borrow strength to meet them. There was little said; Ribault addressed to the Adelantado a few questions, yet these were for the most part unimportant. The silence of La Caille and the others was that of hungry men and not to be mistaken for fear or intimidation. I was using my eyes to as good an advantage as my teeth and let them travel from one bush and hummock to another, seeking to discover, if possible, more than La Caille of their disposition and force. Yet look as I might, everywhere did I see a breast-piece, morion, pike or arquebus. The bushes seemed fairly alive with soldiery and at least an hundred and fifty men were in plain sight from where we sat upon the sand. If this were but an advance guard, or escort from the army of Menendez, then surely the half-starved, illy-armed, dispirited three hundred and fifty cavaliers, seamen, soldiers and tinkers of Admiral Ribault had scant chance of fighting a victorious battle here or elsewhere.

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Though I looked much at the scenes and persons about me, my eyes would ever return to a low lying bush some fifty feet away upon a sand dune. For in its shadow was a human leg, booted, the toe of which extended partly out into the sunlight. I thought it at first the member of some tired fellow asleep and so gave it no thought. But my gaze came back upon that foot with a sinister persistency. For follow the line of the leg into the shadow as I would I could find no companion to it, nor yet a body. It ended with horrid abruptness half above the knee.

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Menendez de Avilés abruptly broke the silence.

"Captain Juan Ribao," he said with an air of command which jarred strangely upon his courteous demeanor, "further subterfuge between us were now a sin and a lie before the face of God our Lord. Are you Catholics or Lutherans?"

"We are Lutherans of the New Faith," returned Ribault, staunchly.

The Spaniard sucked in a long breath between his teeth.

"Gentlemen, your fort is taken and in it all are put to the sword."

He spat the words out mercilessly and hatefully.

There was a dreadful stillness, and then we started up with one accord, looking around from the one to the other. The Sieur de la Notte tried to speak, but the words would not come forth from his throat, at which he clutched and would have gone to the ground had he not fallen back into my arms. The Admiral was bewildered. La Caille, only, did not tremble. He stood up, straight and fearless. [158]

"Señor Pedro Menendez de Avilés," he said calmly and distinctly, "it is my belief that you lie."

Menendez seized his sword at this insult and the Spanish officers rushed forward. They thought surely the Adelantado would run the valiant Frenchman through the body.

But the devil was not ready yet. It was too pleasant a torture to have been ended so soon. He thrust his sword back until it rung in the scabbard and folded his arms, laughing.

"You wish proofs," he then said quickly. "Very well, you shall have them!"

And going to the edge of the bushes he gave some orders, while we stood horror-stricken. In a while came three soldiers bringing some weapons and a sack. Arlac the Ensign, with a look of dismay upon his face, seized upon a sword which was thrust toward him.

"Par la bonté de Dieu," he cried. "It is La Vigne's very own!"

And then we saw dishes and platters bearing the Arms of René de Laudonnière, two axes, dark-stained and broken at the handle, but bearing the name of a maker of Dieppe, a canteen, a cross-bow—all of which were known of De Brésac and La Caille. I pray that never again may any man upon the earth be given such sufferings of mind as began for me from that moment. [159]

Diane—Diane!—

No, no, I would not believe it! The Sieur de la Notte, who had been looking vacantly from La Caille to Arlac the Ensign, fell heavily to the beach uttering a moan which sounded more like that of some poor beast than of a man. I thought that he was dead. He made no move though we dashed water at his head again and again. At last his breathing came with difficulty and when some wine had been poured down his throat he lifted his head and tried to speak.

"Señor Adelantado," he cried, trembling and halting at every word,—at the terror of uttering it,— "my daughter—Diane—Diane de la Notte—she is not—dead—dead. For the love of God—say that—she is not—dead!" And the love he bore her in that speech welded his soul and mine so tight together that not even death could draw us apart.

But the Adelantado would give no answer, only standing there with folded arms gloating upon our misfortune like some great snake upraised to strike, yet sure of his prey and charming by his venomousness. Surely it was the very perfection of cruelty; for the old man lifted himself to a sitting posture with both hands upraised and then fell back upon the sand making no sound. Lifting the poor gentleman in my arms I carried him down the beach to the canoe, where I laid him upon a boat-cloak. [160]

But that was not all. Fearful of some new discovery, yet bewitched and trusting in the word of this Spaniard we followed him and his officers up the beach. One horror but waited upon another. The Spaniards made no concealment of it, and now I knew the reason of the dread horror that had hung upon me. Not only did I see dismembered human legs, half covered with sand, but here and there a body bearing no longer any human semblance. The Adelantado walked a little in advance, swerving neither to the right nor to the left for the dreadful things which his boots frequently touched, regardless,—familiar. Once he stumbled in the sand and cursing, like to have fallen as he uncovered a human head which rolled over until it sat upon its neck, the beard spreading out fan-wise upon the sand and the face through the matted hair grinning fiercely. Arlac and the Admiral, being in front, fell back shuddering, turning whiter even than the sand and holding each other by the arms. I looked at the dreadful object and my blood turned to water. The thing was Verdier!

The Admiral would now go no further, saying that he had seen enough and wished only to go away from it all. But Menendez, in great good humor, smiled, saying it were better to see and know all that could be known. And we believed him. We were heedless of treachery—or aught else, for it seemed to matter little now whether we lived or died, and there was a horrible fascination which seemed to lead us on in spite of ourselves. And so we followed, trembling. [161]

We had gone a distance of a gunshot or more from the end of the sand-spit when we came to two sand hills larger than those we had passed. They lay in two curves, the one toward the other, making an enclosed place which at the two entrances and on the sides was thickly grown up with grass and bushes. To the nearest of these entrances Menendez led us, then stopped and turning grimly to the Admiral,

"Here, Juan Ribao," he said, "is the company of the *Gloire*!"

And entering by the pathway he motioned us to follow.

But a terror had fallen upon us as at the dread of something supernatural. There was no wind and a silence heavy and oppressive hung about the place, the more appalling for the distant roar of the waves upon the beach.

Overhead high in the sky several vultures were idly wheeling. I looked at the faces of the others. La Caille was livid, but his jaw was set and his eye was glassy like that of the dead. Arlac was white as marble, and hung upon me cold and nerveless. The Admiral had clasped his hands together before him and bent his head to his breast. His eyes were closed. He was praying. [162]

For myself I seemed to have no further fear or dread, only a curiosity which fascinated. Leaving Arlac, I walked forward with La Caille and entered. At first I could see nothing, for bushes grew about the place. And God's pure sand, which had unwillingly drunk up the blood of this reeking sacrifice, had mercifully blown in upon it and tenderly made a white coverlet here and there which hid the freshness of the barbarity.

I halt at the horror of it, and I cannot write more of the scene. It is enough to say that the men of the *Gloire's* company had been led to this place in small parties, their hands bound behind their backs with the match-cords of their own arquebuses. Menendez de Avilés with his cane had drawn a line across the entrance. When they had passed within they were set upon by these savage people like tigers and, defenseless, were slaughtered like sheep. They were about two hundred in number and of these not one was left alive. Menendez told us these things calmly, as one who recites that of which he has been told.

Then he turned once more to the Admiral, saying somewhat softly as though to atone a little in our eyes for the deeds he had acknowledged, "It is sad that human beings should be enemies and I would not pursue war relentlessly. But I believe that this is a just fate for all heretics. All Catholics I will befriend; but as you are of the New Sect, I hold you as enemies, and wage deadly war against you. And this I will do with all cruelty (*crueldad*) in this country, where I command as Viceroy and Captain-General for my King. I am here to plant the Holy Gospel, that the Indians may be enlightened and come to a knowledge of the faith." [163]

The Admiral made no reply and so he turned back and we followed him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LINE UPON THE SAND.

 [164]

As I write, the memory of these scenes comes back to me as if the years that are gone were but as yesterday. There is much that is too dreadful to set down and the things of which I speak are told only in order that they may be truthfully known of all honest men of whatever creed or faith. I am told that the artist Le Moyne has related much that happened at Fort Caroline and, as I have said, Nicholas Challeux, the carpenter, has added more. But saving the short story of Christophe Le Breton, there is nothing to my knowledge written down by any survivor from the wrecked vessels of the French fleet. And though the acts of one generation, or indeed a shorter period, may not be lightly judged by another, it can be truthfully said that no deeds of savagery among heathen peoples have ever surpassed those of Menendez for blood-letting and ferocity. It has been told me that the Indians of Outina, seeing in this Spaniard a cruelty and murder-love more marvelous than anything they themselves had known or dreamed, fell straightway to worshiping him as a god, aiding him in his devilries and hanging upon his orders with a greater devotion than that displayed by his own men. Whether this be true or not I do not know. I can better relate the things of which I was a witness. [165]

When we came back to the landing-place the Admiral had succeeded in mastering his despair.

The Spaniard, Menendez, his hand upon his sword hilt listened to him coldly:

"We are wrecked upon this barren shore," Ribault was saying. "A death from hunger threatens more even than your pikes and ordnance. We can only throw ourselves on your pity. What has befallen us may one day befall you."

"That were indeed a misfortune," replied De Avilés.

"I beseech you," continued Ribault, "in the name of the friendship between the Kings of France and Spain, who are brothers and close friends, to aid me in conveying my followers home."

Menendez paused a while. Then he said, slowly and deliberately, "Of that I cannot say. If you will give up your arms and banners and place yourselves at my mercy, you may do so; and I will act towards you as God shall give me grace."^[A]

[A] "—si ellos quieren entregarle las Vanderas, é las Armas, é ponerse en su Misericordia, lo pueden hacer, para que el haga de ellos lo que Dios le diere de Gratia."—The words of De Solis, the brother-in-law of Menendez.

"I cannot be sure my followers will do that," returned the Admiral, "but there is little doubt that under this promise the greater part of my officers and men will surrender upon these terms as honorable prisoners of war. With your permission I will return and consult with those in command upon the other shore." [166]

"Do as you will. Other than this you can have neither truce nor friendship with me." His manner after this was more cordial than before and left a good impression upon our minds.

With formal salutations on both sides, we returned to the canoe. As we were conveyed to our comrades upon the other shore the *Sieur de la Notte* lay against my knee, conscious, but more dead with grief than alive. I could say little save that I thought *Mademoiselle* was still living; but I could not tell why, and he took no comfort.

In spite of the sights we had seen and the massacre of the company of the *Gloire* it was plain to all who had heard him that the words and manner of *Menendez* contained an assurance of protection for such of us as would surrender; but few were in a mood to give up without a battle.

The horror which hung over us and the tidings of the fall of *Fort Caroline* had unnerved me. But the absence of *Diego de Baçan* I took for a favorable augury, and fancied that perhaps *Mademoiselle* had escaped to *Saturiona* and that *De Baçan* was searching for her. I knew that not all at *Fort Caroline* had been killed, for one of the officers had said as much. I could not believe *Mademoiselle* dead, for, that being so, I felt that some instinct should tell me of it and I should have no further wish for life. But back upon the shore my love of life returned to me tenfold. I wished to live to find *Mademoiselle*, and would perform any feat or strategy to save her and carry her back with me to England. If she were alive, my death would not help her; if she were dead, then my own life could be given in no better cause than in taking satisfaction against him who had slain her. [167]

It was no easy matter to decide. Whether to stay upon the sand-spit to die of hunger or at the hands of the Indians, or to surrender to *Menendez* and be sent for life to the galleys, I could not determine. Either plan promised little enough. In the one case I was not sure that communication with the interior could be found, for dangerous swamps and quicksands ran this way and that, making progress almost impossible; and starvation was imminent. Before we could come to the domain of *Saturiona* there were miles of hostile country, the traversing of which would take many weeks, perhaps months. To surrender seemed equally desperate. We had seen the deeds of which this madman was capable; and in spite of his word of honor, which holds high among men of authority, and which he now wished to give under seal, his humor might change and our fate be that of those who had gone before. But by the one plan I could not hear of *Mademoiselle* for months; by the other I would be carried straightway to *San Augustin* by our enemies, and might see her within the week. The thought enthralled me. [168]

By some ruse and skill I would effect her escape. *De Baçan* probably thought me dead; and unless *Mademoiselle* had told him, could not know that I was of this expedition. And the beard which had grown upon my face might well disguise me; so that until I was prepared to meet him on equal footing I would not let my presence be known.

In a little while the Admiral sent another messenger across the water offering a ransom of an hundred thousand ducats, and the answer which came back encouraged us much more. He would accept the ransom, he said, "it would much grieve him not to do so, for he had great need of it." I felt that I could not do better than to become a captive, and so win my way most quietly to where the prisoners of *Fort Caroline* were confined.

Toward evening, the sun being about an hour from setting, the Admiral mounted upon a hummock of sand and addressed his desperate little army in the following terms: [169]

"You have heard, *mes braves*, of the conditions which this Spanish general has set before us. Those among you who will render up your arms and surrender in peace, he will accept as honorable prisoners of war, to be done with as he shall deem most fitting. You have heard of the massacre of your comrades of the *Gloire* and must be the judge of your own actions. I would force no man to surrender against his will without a battle; but I do believe in the promises which now have been made to me by word of mouth and by writ. For no man professing any sort of religion, as this Spaniard does, were so hideous as to fall upon unarmed men after a given word which has put them in his power."

There was a murmur among the seamen and several of them raised their voices, shouting,

"But he has done so! He has done so!"

"Perhaps,—my friends. I could not learn from the Spaniard how your comrades of the *Gloire* came to fall into his hands. But I cannot believe that he promised to them what he has promised me to-day. I have it from him in a writing which he has signed and sealed, and which he has sent me of his own free will; and I believe that he will keep these promises. On the morrow I shall surrender myself to him as an honorable prisoner of war to be sent to Spain, and by the grace of God, perhaps soon released." [170]

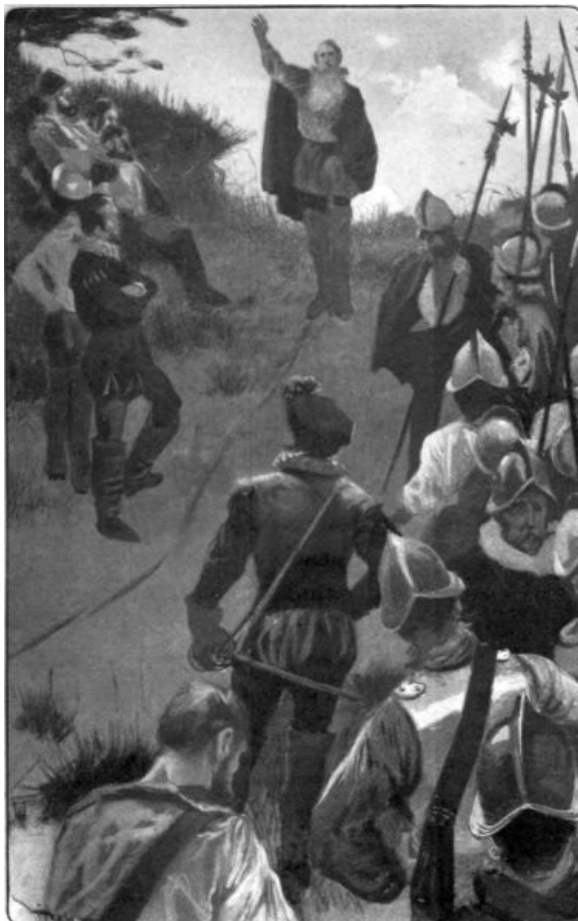
This last statement of the Admiral's position raised a great hue-and-cry among the company, and many of them shouted loudly.

"No, we will not go! We will not surrender!" Others were silent, waiting for the Admiral to finish. He stood there upon the sand-hill, his tall figure straight as a spar, outlined sharp and clear against the western glow. His hands were clasped before him, a position in which we had often found him of late, and he waited composed until the strife should cease.

"My friends," he said at last, and a deep and solemn silence fell around us, "we are in the hands of God. We have done what it has pleased Him to permit us to do toward building up in this great country the Church of Christ according to our religion. We have been pursued by every misfortune possible, and yet our faith in Him should not diminish one jot."

"Amen! Amen!" murmured many with deep reverence.

Then the Admiral walked down from the hummock towards the ocean, drawing with his sword as he went,—[a line in the sand!](#) Then raising his hand, he said,



["A LINE IN THE SAND!"](#)

"To-morrow morning, my friends, I shall surrender. All of those who will accompany me will follow over upon the hither side of this line which I have marked. I make no compulsion. Those others of you who will not come must pass to the farther side." And so saying he walked over to the side of the line toward the Spanish camp.

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It was a supreme moment. That mark in the sand which the winds and seas could sweep away at will seemed the dividing line between life and death, and none knew which side to choose. Not even a whisper came from the men, and the droning of the surf as it rolled in on the beach seemed ominous and loud in the stillness.

After a period of suspense which seemed interminable an old man with a gray beard, bowing his head as though in submission to a will over which he had no control, gathered his cloak about him and walked to where stood the Admiral. Bordelais followed. Then Arlac and three seamen passed to the opposite side. Bachasse, dutiful as ever, followed his captain, together with Ottigny and others to the number of ten. But many more moved to the opposite side. It was like a game. For, until the matter was settled, no man spoke. They came from the crowd in twos and threes, gravely until they reached their companions, when some of them patted the others upon the back, saying quietly, but with good cheer,

"We sink or swim together, mes gars!"

"There will at least be a fine fight, eh?"

"We are not yet ready for the sheep-market, mon Amiral!"

"There is still good wine to be drunk in San Augustin, and we've good use for our windpipes."

[172]

And many other rude jests which reached only the ears of La Caille, De Brésac, myself and those few who were standing by them. For a moment I wavered. There was something much after my own heart in the way these brave fellows defied this Menendez, casting themselves out into the wilderness of forest and swamp where death would certainly find them. They had a fighting chance and La Caille, De Brésac and I would have gone with them; but I knew that the surer way to Mademoiselle was that which I had chosen, and so I wavered not for long.

By the time the sun was down the matter was settled, but few still standing aloof. About two hundred officers and men had gone to the further side, refusing to surrender, and were now forming into some kind of martial order under Arlac, a sea-lieutenant named Pierre Le Jeune and another called D'Alençon. The remainder, among them the Sieur de la Notte, La Caille, De Brésac, Bourdelais, Bachasse, Ottigny, Job Goddard, Salvation Smith, myself and many other soldiers and gentlemen as well as seamen, to the number of about one hundred and fifty, stood on the side of the Admiral.

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With the vain hope that one of the French ships might yet appear unharmed to take us off, the

Admiral determined to wait until the morning before crossing the channel, and so informed Menendez de Avilés by messenger.

The night fell chill and gusty, for it was well into the middle of October. That last night we remained together, those of one party sending messages by those of the other to any refugees from Fort Caroline who might be discovered, or friends in France whom they might not see again. Huge fires were lit upon the beach in order that any vessels sailing on the coast might see us and come to the rescue. Around these we sat or lay, some of us sleeping but most of us waking—until the dawn. When the stars began to pale a little, Le Jeune, Arlac and D'Alençon got their men in motion, taking as many arms with them as was needful, and marched down the beach in the direction from which we had come. And that was the last I saw of them.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MARTYRDOM.

[174]

The morning of that dreadful day dawned cold and clear. In the east over the ocean the sky was bright and glorious as though the heavens were opening. But scan the sea as we might, not a sail appeared and all hope of thus saving ourselves from imprisonment was gone.

When the company of Arlac had disappeared around the point a league or so away to the southward, the Admiral arose from where he had been lying upon the beach by one of the fires and, calling about him those who would come, knelt down upon the sand and fervently prayed for the safety of those who had been spared until that day. Then rising he went down the beach and with La Caille, Bourdelais and myself, entered the canoe and we were rowed rapidly to the other shore. The Admiral, in order to keep his part of the compact with De Avilés, carried with him the royal standard and other flags, his sword, dagger, helmet, buckler and the official seal given him by Coligny.

Menendez, upon our approach, arose and stood waiting for the Admiral to speak.

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"I have come in behalf of myself and one hundred and fifty persons of my command to surrender as honorable prisoners of war. I have brought these standards and my personal arms and seal in token of the good faith which shall therefore bear equally between us."

Menendez motioned to one of his officers, who took from the hands of La Caille and me these things which we had brought.

"Two hundred of your men," said the Spaniard, "have retreated from their position and I will wage a war against them with blood and fire. And you I shall treat as our Lord shall inspire."

Calling to some of his soldiers, he directed two of them to enter the canoe and bring over the Frenchmen, who stood waiting upon the opposite bank. It seemed that they were to come in companies of ten and, as they arrived, would be made prisoners by an equal number of the Spanish soldiers and led toward San Augustin.

Then Menendez came again to where we stood at the edge of the bushes. He was surrounded by a number of his soldiers and he motioned to us to move behind the sand-hills; this, unsuspecting, we did, out of sight of the other shore.

Then for the first time I took notice of the face of the Adelantado. If it were hard and cruel of ordinary, the look it now wore was like nothing so much as that of a wild beast; his under jaw and lip projected hideously, but under the brows, in spite of their ferocity, there was the gleam of intelligence and cunning which made the whole expression the more sinister and dreadful. He came close to the Admiral, looking him in the face:—

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"Juan Ribao," he said, "you and all of your company are now in my power, and I shall do with you—as *God shall give me grace!*"

As God should give him grace! I looked around me at the bearded faces of the soldiery, who were now closing in upon us, and the menace of those words,—the very same that he had uttered in his promise of yesterday,—first dawned upon me with its terrible meaning.

The Admiral looked him in the eyes, still unknowing. "I am ready to go with you," he replied calmly.

But two soldiers came up from behind, seizing his arms and then—and not till then—the scales fell from the eyes of all of us and we saw that we had been duped,—trapped, by this arch fiend and traitor.

La Caille and I exchanged glances and turning about made one desperate spring for liberty. La Caille fell full upon the point of a pike and so died, making not even an outcry. A sword scratched my arm and I pitched upon the figure of the man who wielded it. The sword flew from his hand, but his arms closed about me tightly and over and over we rolled among the bushes, the soldiers dodging about trying to get their weapons home upon my body, but fearing to hurt their fellow. He was strong and I weak from lack of food; in a few moments he had me undermost, while he was striving to draw a poniard. Another man here fell upon my legs, while still another was running forward with a partisan.

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I gave myself up for lost. Hoping to warn those who had not yet been conveyed across the

channel, I let forth a loud cry. Then my adversary leaned down on me, clapping his hand across my mouth. I bit into his finger fiercely and thought the dagger was coming down.

But I saw his face at the same moment that he saw mine; and knew why I had been so easily overcome, for it was Don Diego de Baçan! I watched the point of the dagger; but it did not fall. His surprise was so great that his hand remained suspended in mid-air, and he drew in a quick breath of fright as though he had seen a phantom. His soldiers, noting his discomfiture, did not strike, but stood waiting. In a moment a knowledge of the truth came to him.

Then, perhaps in a spirit of fair play, remembering a time when I had set him free, he lowered his weapon and bade his men bind and gag me and set me on my feet. [178]

He stood in front of me holding his sides, alternately laughing and sucking his bitten finger.

"Well, well, Sir Pirato, the dead hath come to life of a verity. And this is no miracle but a clear process of reasoning. It would have grieved me much to see thee die just now, for I have rarely met a man of such honest thews. It doth me good to see thy face again. Though by my conscience I have always sworn that I like not a beard upon the countenance of Englishmen, which to my mind should ever be round and hairless like the sucklings that they are."

I listened composedly to his banter, glad of the chance to rid my mind of the horror which was to come.

"It is a pity, my fledgling cock, that Mademoiselle de la Notte did not inform me—ah! you start. Yes, yes, she lives—in very excellent health and would have bidden you farewell, had she known. She will mourn when you're dead, Sir Pirato, for she thinks of you with great kindness." And so he went on adding one insult to another, veiling them under this thin coating of humor, so that they might cut the deeper. But I saw from his surprise and from the manner in which he spoke that Mademoiselle had told him nothing. He was lying in his throat. If she were alive she was safe also from him—that I knew. But I trembled with rage at his manner and innuendos and would have killed him if I could. I remembered the chance I had upon the *Cristobal* and felt accursed for having let such a thing as he continue to live upon the earth. I saw him go over to the Adelantado and talk earnestly, pointing toward me as though asking some favor. The Adelantado shook his head in refusal, but at last wavering, seemed to give assent. [179]

The safety of Mademoiselle was first in my thoughts and made me almost happy as I stood there, though for myself there seemed little chance that I should come out of the adventure alive. De Baçan had won, it seemed. If there were a chance of escape I should not be slow to take it; but if I were to die I would show no white feather to this Spaniard whom I hated,—and now hate, even that he is dead, as I think no man was ever hated before.

My comrades of the *Trinity* gave no sign of fear, though they felt the nearness of their doom as keen as I. The Admiral stood erect, his head high in air. Bourdelais had been pinioned and bound, and stood near his chief, helpless but determined that no supplication for pity should escape his lips. My heart went out to the Sieur de la Notte, for he was white as death and so weak that two soldiers carried him. His livid, delicate face looked this way and that as though his mind wandered and were unconscious of it all. I wanted to speak to him one last word—to tell him that Mademoiselle was alive and might be among the people of Satouriona; he might have died happy. The pity of it! But I could not, for my mouth was bandaged tightly and it was impossible for me to make a sound above a murmur. [180]

At length all the Frenchmen of Ribault had come upon this shore and stood or lay bound and helpless among the sand-hills. Then Menendez de Avilés came to Admiral Ribault and said again,

"Is there any one among you who will go to confession?"

Ribault turned his head, closing his eyes and answered calmly,

"I and all here are of the Reformed Faith."

Then he looked upward as though making one last mute appeal for the lives of the men whom he had unwittingly led to this martyrdom. His face shone with a new beauty as he gazed upward, and the heavens smiled back at him. The brightness, and glory of the day were wonderful, and that made the contrast the stranger. It even seemed as though the sun, the sea, the sky and all the wonders of God's earth and firmament were sullied and polluted by the touch of these atrocities. There, upon the lonely sand-spit in the hands of these fanatics, we were forgotten of God. [181]

Then Ribault raised his voice in a chant which mingled softly with the roar of the surf and melted into the air like the passing of a soul. It was the Psalm "*Domine memento mei*" and one by one the Huguenots, some kneeling, but most standing upright, fearlessly took it up until a great and holy prayer went up to God. There was something greater than the things of earth in that grand chorus, and in the faces of these martyrs was the look which must be borne by those already within the gates of Paradise.

As I saw Menendez de Avilés and his butchers come forward, closing in, two men took me from the rear, dragging me behind a sand-hill, throwing me upon the beach and tightly binding my feet and legs with ropes and arquebus cords. They fastened my handkerchief over the bandage upon my mouth to make it the more secure, and passed this closely over my ears so that now only sight remained to me. But this assisted me little, for my neck was bound so tight that I could not turn my head. They threw me face downward upon the sand and so left me.

I lay there I know not how long, expecting each moment to receive the point of a pike between the shoulders. I have thanked God many times since then that in those dreadful moments he made me powerless to see and hear. So great was the agony of mind that more than once I prayed that all might soon be ended. The sufferings through which I was passing had made me well-nigh distraught; but it was only a temporary lunacy like that upon the beach after the wreck. And I have come to this day, at a ripe age, in full possession of all my faculties. Death was not yet for me.

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In a while there came two of these fiends reeking and drunk with slaughter; unbinding my feet, they bade me follow on behind their fellows who had gone before toward San Augustin, carrying their bloody trophies. The lives of four others beside mine own had been spared; and we prisoners,—De Brésac, a fifer, a drummer and a trumpeter were tied together for our better security, and in single line were marched up the beach. Each looked at the heels of the man in front, fearing to raise his eyes upon some new barbarity. Toward noon there was a rest and these butchers fed us upon biscuit and preserved fruits, giving each a draught of *eau de vie*. It seemed from this that they meant for the present to save us further physical suffering. The drink set new life coursing through my veins, and by afternoon I had steeled my memory in some sort against the things which had been, and had prepared my spirit against the new and, like enough, more desperate trials of mind and body which must surely come.

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For what else could De Baçan be saving me? Was it for a torture worse than the death of Ribault, La Notte and those other martyrs, my companions? What hideous devilry could he be devising? I thought of his sinister threat upon the *San Cristobal*, and I felt sure he was preparing to work his worst upon me. But even as I was,—helpless, in his power,—I had no fear of him; only hatred, which had driven out all other personal relation. There was no instrument that the Inquisition had devised which should provoke one groan, and no torture that he could invent which should wring one tribute to his devilish ingenuity. So long as Mademoiselle were not there to make my pulses tremble, he should have no sign. Nay, more,—I would escape. Mademoiselle alive, let them give me so much as half a hair's breadth of license and I vowed that there were not enough Spaniards in all the Flowery Land to hold me a prisoner. And—why I knew not,—I was as sure she was alive as though she were there by my side. I would escape back to Europe to let the King of France and our own Queen Bess of England know what manner of fiends the King of Spain had let loose, to make a living hell of this great and good land across the water.

It was right that I should escape. There were none who were with Ribault when he was betrayed save me, and none who could give the lie to the tales this Spaniard Menendez would tell to his people and to the people of France. I determined that if God willed, I would be the instrument of justice upon them. And if the iron helm of fate were entrusted to my hands, I would seize it with no light grasp. For the moment, even the thought of Mademoiselle and all she had suffered and might still suffer vanished from my mind, and I wished nothing but vengeance for the murder of my comrades. I knew not until now how dear they had been to me. *She* would understand. She would know. They were of her religion; but like me, she had not the humility to bow meekly under such a blow. If I could first escape out of their intimate clutches I knew that I could get to France. There had been many ships on the Florida coast of late—English ships too—and Admiral Hawkins, or perhaps even Captain Hooper, might now be in those waters.

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And so my mind planned and planned, as I trudged along toward San Augustin between the serried ranks of my captors. There was no chance of escape, for arquebusiers to the number of ten brought up the rear, and De Baçan had given them orders to shoot us in the back did we give the slightest sign or movement of a nature suspicious. In this fashion we walked until dark, De Baçan saying no word nor even coming near. Then we turned sharply through the dunes in-shore to the left, and came abruptly to the bay within the sand-spit and upon four large barges which had been brought to convey us across this arm of the sea.

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It was not until then that I had a chance for words with Diego de Baçan. I determined that could I speak with him I would leave no effort of diplomacy unmade to secure his attention and approval. For this was no place for pride, and therein lay the way to safety. It so happened that in the boat his thwart was next to mine. With some display of good humor he addressed me:—

“Gratitude may not be one of your virtues, Sir Pirato.”

“I find little cause for gratitude, Don de Baçan,” said I.

“Not even that you have your life as a gift from the Adelantado? You are truly hard to please. Here have I saved you from a long wait in the bowels of hell, and you pay me with what?—not even a smile of thanks or welcome.”

“Then it is to you I owe my life?”

“For the present, Señor Killigrew.”

“And why have you spared me?”

“I know not. A whim, perhaps.”

“A happy whim for me.”

“Be not so sure of that, my bantam. I fancied you dead long since, you see, in spite of the Señorita La Notte. There was something of surprise that made me spare you the dagger—something of curiosity that made me beg your life of the Captain General—curiosity to see in what way it were best to kill men like you who die hard.”

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“We can die but once,” I returned doggedly.

"I'm not so sure. You don't die easy, my master. And you own such fine tough sinews it were a pity to have you foisted off upon the devil with such small display of resistance."

"It is the torture then?" I asked.

"It will be, my friend, as the Adelantado shall decide. I have a fancy that in a short time thou wilt become a valiant servant of the Church. I have known a heretic rabid as thyself, turn speedily Christian at the stake."

"Fire is a very excellent servant of the devil," I returned, and so warmly that I regretted my petulance the moment after.

"Ah, you think I may not bend your spirit! Wait and see. Why, in our army we have a little soldier so skilful in mechanical toys that he can set his touch upon each particular nerve in the body, running his fingers over them as lightly as one would play the lute."

"It ill becomes a fine, big man like you," I returned, "a man who has little fear of aught upon the earth, to trifle with these petty contrivances." I thought I would try him upon a new course. [187]

"My muscles, like yours, are good enough for most of the purposes of this life; but with careful feeding you might best me again. You see, I acknowledge you. Nay, my bantam, you cannot again touch my vanity. I fight you no more."

"You will not fight me in your own camp?" said I, unwilling to drop the question so easily. "Surely, there will be little danger to yourself."

"Who spoke of danger?" he said irritably, and then laughing, "Ha! ha! I fear no danger. Why should I fight you? I can see my soldiers take your spirit out by slow inches. And I will view the spectacle with great serenity—in company with a lady of your acquaintance who has been pleased——"

"You devil!" I cried, unable to restrain myself. "You liar and blasphemer!" and with a leap I hurled myself against him until he fell against the gunwale, and we all but went overboard. I striking at him with my bound hands and elbows. The boat rocked from this side to that, and we seemed like to capsize. Several men were striking at me with boat-hooks and oars, and at length they dragged me off and threw me down in the bottom of the boat.

"As God lives—I will kill you now!" he said fiercely; and rising he drew his dagger. But he thought better of it before he touched me, for he thrust the weapon back and sat quietly down on his thwart. [188]

"We will wait," he said calmly.

Thus ended my diplomacy! What a fool I was; perhaps every chance of escape was lost. That was all there was of it. They would take us to the camp at San Augustin and there kill us like dogs.

CHAPTER XV.

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THE LODGE OF SELOY.

At the landing-place we were met by a large concourse of soldiers and priests, who crowded about with waving flambeaux, shouting and bidding the victors welcome. Then a half-dozen of the priests, with De Solis, took position at the head of the column and we marched toward the Lodge of Seloy, the priests chanting the *Te Deum* as we marched. And when we had come to an open place, a chaplain called Mendoza, who seemed a person of importance,—the same who has since written of this expedition,—came walking to meet the Adelantado, holding forward a crucifix in his hand.

When Menendez de Avilés reached the spot where the chaplain stood, he fell down upon his knees and most of his followers with him and gave a thousand thanks for his victory. Then Mendoza raised his voice and said, "We owe to God and His mother, more than to human strength, this victory over the adversaries of the holy Catholic religion. The greatest profit of this victory is the triumph which our Lord has granted us, whereby His holy Gospel will be introduced into this country, a thing so needful for saving so many souls from perdition."^[B] [190]

[B] Mendoza's Journal.

What a dreadful sacrilege it seemed that these brutal men, dripping yet with the blood of human creatures they had put to death, should call upon their God in thanksgiving, asking Him to be an accomplice in the murders they had done!

By and by we were taken to the great Lodge of Seloy, which had been converted into a general council chamber and meeting-place. It was a huge barn-like structure, strongly framed of entire trunks of trees and thatched with palmetto leaves. Around it, entrenchments and fascines of sand had been thrown up so that it was very capable of defense. In one corner of this place there was a small cabin, used as a dungeon; it had a door leading out to the square and another leading into the large hall. But there were no windows, the light coming in the daytime from an aperture in the roof and in the night from a fire burning on the sandy floor. They threw us upon some cots of bark and skins and mounted a guard of three soldiers over us—far too many, I thought, since we

were tightly bound.

I looked about me, along the sides, trying to pierce the duskiess, which a torch and the burning fire dimly served to lighten, to get my bearings in case any fortunate event should give a chance for escape. But I could see nothing to give hope now, and despondency came over me as I thought of what had been. Could it be that only a day had passed since I had been with my company of the *Trinity* alive and well upon the sand-spit? It seemed a hundred years. [191]

One by one the events of the last few days passed in view and I found myself marveling not a little at the actions of Diego de Baçan. He wished to torture me, no doubt; but as I thought of his manner, it seemed that he held me in a certain awe. The way in which his life and mine seemed intertwined, the one with the other, was strange indeed. I could not believe that I was to die as he had intended—before Mademoiselle. In spite of his boasts, I believed that she was not there at the Camp of San Augustin, nor yet at Fort Caroline,—now blood-christened San Mateo. I recalled the vision when half-distracted I lay upon the sands after the wreck, and I remembered the look in the eyes of Mademoiselle as she balanced the poniard upon her fingers. I had heard some of the guards speak of certain women who had been saved from Fort Caroline, but they were servants and wives of artisans, and I had not the courage to ask further. Had I done so they would doubtless have insulted her and demeaned me, or perhaps brutally have told me of her death. So I thought it wise to hold my peace, though my heart seemed bursting within me. I watched the light flicker upon the breastpiece of the guard beside the fire, and wondered what the morrow would bring forth. Then the anguish and struggle of the day told, and I fell into deep and merciful sleep. [192]

In the morning they took us out manacled two and two and marched us up and down the square to keep the blood in circulation, that the withes might not bite too deep into the flesh before the time appointed; and this they did thereafter daily. They were fattening us like fowls. The soldiers came out and jostled and spurned us, tossing billets of wood at our heads so that we were dodging about, most of the time in a quandary.

The guards seemed to have no interest in the matter and watched composedly as the others danced about us, laughing merrily at any sally more witty than ordinary. But for my part, I found it better to my liking than to lie there in the dark shadows of the Lodge of Selay trussed like pigs for the Tavistock market. I bore these taunts and gibes in rare good humor, for I was stretching my limbs and could feel my strength coming back to me unimpaired. On the second day they took away the other prisoners, leaving only De Brésac and me together. Why they had spared him he could not say, save only that Menendez himself, aiming a blow at him with a poniard and blood-befuddled missing his mark, had seen in that a sign of God's displeasure, and so saved him until he might debate upon the subject. [193]

On the third day De Baçan, in company of Menendez de Avilés, going the rounds of the barracks, came to where we lay. Menendez had on a costly suit of black velvet with a cap to match, silk trunks and boots of a fine leather. He began prodding at me with his cane. "So this is the English heretic of Dieppe," he said, making an uncouth sound which might have been a laugh in any other.

"Señor," said De Baçan, "this man has as many lives as a cat."

"Ah! But no more! We must take him severally—one life after the other. Have you thought of the matter, Captain?"

"Nothing, your Excellency, save that the end for this one must be certain."

"And the other? Can they not be made to confess in the Faith? 'Twould be a merciful work to set them aright."

As they turned away, Menendez laughingly said,

"Have them well fattened, my good Captain, for I like not scrawny captives. But after all we owe this fellow much, and dog that he is——" but I could not hear the rest of what he said. 'Twas no cheerful conversation for De Brésac and me. [194]

At the end of this day a thing most curious happened. We were sitting bound by the fire, for after the dropping of the sun the night grew raw and chill. The guard had just been changed. The flames burned brightly within and made a yellow ghost of the sentinel at the door as he stood against the blackness without. A second guard sat within the lodge, and another could be seen down the path as he walked slowly to and fro. The face of the man at the door was held in the shadow of his morion, but I could see that he wore a great black beard which covered his face and that he was most stocky and strong of build, the muscles of his calves and thighs swelling out, much to my admiration, and his knotty fingers betokening great strength. 'Twould be no easy task to get by this fellow.

Suddenly, clear and distinct upon my ear, but not so loud as to seem out of ordinary, came that same low whistle I had heard once before in the prison at Dieppe—the call of the boatswain upon the *Griffin*! My heart stopped its beat,—I thought that I had been dreaming, it was so low and soft. Then it came again, and De Brésac would have spoken of it had I not laid my hand against his arm.

Whence did it come? I knew that I was not mistaken now, and my heart was beating high. Then the fellow at the door whom I had been watching, after looking at his fellow guards, raised his head and I saw the movement of his lips through the great black mustache. I heard the whistle for the third time. I looked around hastily at the guard in the lodge, but he was intent upon burnishing his breastpiece. Presently I said in English as though speaking with De Brésac: [195]

"Welcome, Job Goddard, to San Augustin," and I saw the shoulders of my sentinel shake in comprehension. Then he shouldered his arquebus and settled his sword in its sheath, walking up and down again. He made a threatening and ugly figure against the darkness, scowling as he walked, but he was so welcome a sight I could have shouted in glee. How in God's providence had this seaman of mine been spared?

Making no sign of aught unusual I talked on with De Brésac, telling him who this man was and how, God willing, we might make a break for liberty. I bethought me of a plan to have a sign with Goddard. I poured the water from the pitcher in a corner behind the skins and then raising my voice I cried in Spanish,

"Hey, señor the guard! Is it not possible to have some water fresh from the spring? We die soon enough, in all conscience."

But Goddard made no sign, only walking up and down and looking out into the night.

I was perplexed. What could be the matter with the man? Could he not see the advantage I had prepared?

"Hola, there!" I cried again, pointing to the pitcher, "our throats are parched. Water! water!" But he made no motion of having understood.

Then the other fellow came forward grumbling.

"You Frenchmen have throats of flint," he growled, "but you may shout at that fellow till you die of weariness and he will not hear, for he has lost both speech and hearing. Patiño must think you safe enough. A fine fashion, I say, to leave the eyes and ears for me."

"Ah, he hears not?" said I, comprehending.

"He is of a detachment from Fort San Mateo that came down to-night. I do not know him."

And taking the pitcher he went out past Goddard, jostling him with an oath, and so toward the spring that was at the corner of the building. No sooner had he gone than Goddard—being sure the third guard could not see—sprang with a bound to where we were lying.

"You must get away to-night, Master Sydney," he whispered hoarsely. "To-morrow they'll find me out."

"Yes, yes," said I, starting up in excitement, "cut me loose!"

"No!—not now! The square is full of soldiers. To-night! The scuts are drinking brandy brought from the Fort, sir. Before the change of the watch, I'll have weapons an' help ye both. Sh——" and he moved back to his post, for the third sentinel had come to the path.

In a moment the surly fellow who had gone for water returned, and set the pitcher down between us. He found us talking with unconcern; though I felt my temples throbbing so that I feared he would discover me, and I was glad enough to raise the pitcher to my lips to conceal my excitement. De Brésac kept countenance well; and, unsuspecting, the guard returned to the task of cleaning the spots from his plates and morion.

We could now hear plainly the shouts of the soldiers as they sang and danced in the square, though for an angle in the doorway we could not see them. They were making a fine festival over their feats of butchery!

"'Tis fortunate," whispered De Brésac, "for we may yet make a good running fight for it."

"Aye, Chevalier. 'Tis better to be spitted outright than to die at intervals. I think we may give some account of ourselves."

"If I had but a piece of steel," he groaned,— "but a piece of steel—I would make carrion of the fellow with the morion there!"

"Aye, and you haven't! Wait a little. Something may happen."

But like most plans of the like, this one came to naught; and I saw our hopes of escape upon that night go glimmering. For at about three hours from sunset who should come into the hut but Don Diego de Baçan with a quarrelsome disposition of mind and a swaggering body. He had been drinking freely and still carried a jug of *eau-de-vie*, from which he drank at intervals while he talked. With him were two officers, by name Vincente and Patiño. Patiño, a thin black fidgety shadow of a man, was captain of the watch. He had been upon the *San Cristobal* and I remembered him well. Fortunately, he, too, had drunk more than was good, for otherwise he was just such a squirming worm to pry into all small affairs with most profit, and I trembled lest Job Goddard should betray himself. They had us carried into the main hall, where a fire of logs was built; and then when chairs and table had been brought, they set upon us in every conceivable fashion to try the temper; to the end that in a short while De Brésac, whose nerves were near the surface, was touched to the very quick of his honor and lay foaming, speechless with rage.

It suited the humor of De Baçan to offer us drink; of which, since it came from his own jug, I took a little, though it was not needful for the business I had in hand, and I never had a habit of much drinking.

"Well, my petticoat hunter," he jeered at last, "you have made a fine mess of this business, sure enough."

"I must confess, Señor," I replied, smiling up at him, "that I am none so comfortable as I might be."

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"Comfort is ever the desire of old women and Englishmen, Sir Pirato!"

"But we have no chance to exercise—to stretch our limbs——" I began.

"Stretch indeed!" put in little Patiño. "There is a rack in the camp; it can stretch you out to ten feet at least, my friend."

"'Tis only a matter of a few inches more or less," said De Baçan, laughing, "and upon my life, I have ever thought you too broad across the shoulders to be in good proportion." Then the three of them roared with laughing.

I saw no humor in this speech.

"In a bout at strength I find the breadth of shoulder of some small value," said I.

"Well said! The old woman grows a spicy tongue, Patiño. Humph! You like the shoulders broad, —mayhap you'd like them broader; we can stretch or draw you out in any direction to suit the fancy—cut you down or push you in—eh! Patiño?—bloat you up or pull you out—as you will. What think you of the business?"

"There is small profit in it for me, Señor," I replied in good part.

"He's content with his deformity, Vincente."

"'Tis like a smug Englishman," sneered Patiño.

"Nay, I am but a slow sort of person, lieutenant, and find your mode of progress far too rapid," I laughed.

"Bah!" growled Diego. "You fancy yourself most satisfactory upon all points."

"There is nothing that these Englishmen can do," lisped Patiño, "but eat and sleep—eat and sleep——"

"And fight, Señor," said I. "You have forgotten the *Great Griffin*."

And as De Baçan laughed at him, the little man hid his face in his mug in chagrin.

"Well, what of it, Englishman?" said Diego, smiling. "Let me tell you that the most of life lies not in fighting. There is one thing,"—and he paused significantly,—"one thing you fat-headed English don't know—nor ever will. And do you care what that is? It's woman! No more notion of the art of loving have you than a row of marlinespikes, no more warmth of temper than a dolphinfish! Pouf! You live too far away from the sun to have much success with ladies, Señor Killigrew."

I foresaw now that finding other means unavailing to try my temper, he meant again to speak of Mademoiselle, knowing that here he had a never-failing source of rancor. I glanced to where Job Goddard stood at the doorway and a look passed between us. Then he went out into the shadow and disappeared down the path.

I knew not whither Goddard had gone, and wishing to gain time, said with as good grace as I could summon,

"The Spanish have ever had the repute for great courtliness of manner, Don de Baçan."

"You speak in ignorance, my fledgling. It is no question of manner, but of a thousand things you beef-eaters have no notion of."

"Aye," said Patiño, ruefully, twisting his mustache, "and their women are as bad as themselves."

"Bah! they're cold and lifeless every one of them. It is the French women who respond most aptly and most—er—delightfully—eh, Vincente?"

"Yes, my captain," he replied. "And of those saved from Fort Caroline"—and he grinned like a ghoul—"there are five or six most enticing."

"And most responsive you would say—eh? You are successful upon most occasions, Vincente." And so saying he poured out a pot half full of his fiery liquor, which he straightway drained to the dregs, setting the vessel down with a crash which split it half in two. Then he called to Goddard for a new pot and more liquor. But Goddard would not hear, and the other man was sent.

"No, 'tis not courtliness, Señor Pirato," said he, leaning forward at last, "but a matter which concerns only the lover and the lady—the flash of an eye—the touch of a hand—which sends the pulses tingling; the opening of the lips—which tremble for the touch of kisses—this and much more."

At this moment there was a noise without, which sounded like a groan, followed by silence, and I knew why Job Goddard had gone out by the sentry's path.

"What was it?" said Vincente, staggering to the door. But Job Goddard met him there most unconcerned, pointing out over his shoulder.

"'Tis nothing but some drunken beast of a soldier," said Patiño. And Vincente came back to the table.

I now knew there was no time to lose, and made up my mind upon a course of action. Catching the eye of De Brésac, I suddenly began to strain at my bonds, jumping and struggling as well as I could about the fire, rolling at last under the table.

"Here! here! what is the man about?" shouted Patiño. "Help, sentry, help, he will get away!"

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Goddard came running in and fell upon me with all his weight as though trying to secure me. I felt his keen knife slit through the bonds and a poniard was thrust into my hand. Then we rolled out from under the table as though struggling furiously, and so upon De Brésac, Goddard turning him loose and arming him as he had armed me.

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The drunken fools seemed in a kind of stupor, not alive to what was really happening until we three sprang upon our feet. The surprise was complete and the advantage was clearly with us. I have never struck a blow so hard as that one which I put upon the face of this Vincente, for he went flying backward over the table, upon his head, his boots sticking up over a bench. Before Patiño could even draw, Goddard thrust him through the heart and he sank down, making no sound.

De Brésac, seizing a sword, valiantly had set upon De Baçan; who, giving a roar like a bull, fell to with such energy that the Frenchman was put immediately upon the defensive and was forced over toward the door, through which, before we knew it, De Baçan vanished like the wind, running out across the square to the barracks of the men, yelling like a demon the while. He was a fiend incarnate, this man.

There was not a moment to lose. Seizing the weapons of Patiño and Vincente, we dashed out around the corner of the lodge and so into the forest, running at the top of our speed.

CHAPTER XVI. OF OUR ESCAPE.

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As we sped up the wide path through the thicket, we could hear De Baçan as he ran bellowing across the square. It was black darkness under the branches, but as we accustomed ourselves we could make out the line of the path ahead. Twigs and branches struck us in the face, but Goddard thundered on with great confidence, setting for us a good round pace, and De Brésac, who was a fleet runner, keeping close upon his heels.

In a moment there were loud cries from the buildings behind, but we could hear plain above them all the great roars of Don Diego as the soldiers came after us in full pursuit. Ignorant of the road as we were we had the advantage of being in our sober senses, spurred, moreover, by the love of life, which now at this chance came with a fulness to nerve us for any desperateness. After all the suffering of mind and body which had gone before, this freedom was sweet indeed, and in our hearts we knew that we could not again fall alive into the hands of these people. The fresh air of the forest tasted sweet to the throat, and I drank it greedily into my lungs as I ran, following the gray shadows ahead of me.

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After a while, we heard the shouting of De Baçan no more, only the cries of some of the soldiers who were speedily coming forward.

But the great speed told upon us, and the sea legs of Job Goddard, which were not meant for such work as this, refused to move so rapidly and he fell a little behind. De Brésac seemed imbued with new life and ran with great agility, leaping over logs and twisting through the bushes like one brought up to the crafts of the woods rather than the courtesies and fantasies of the Court.

But it was uncertain and awkward progress at best. Goddard had a pike and an arquebus, while De Brésac and I had each a poniard and a rapier. Twice I fell prone to the ground over the tree trunks and bushes, and once had overrun Goddard in the dark and we two had fallen, rolling over in a monstrous tangle. The sound of the pursuit was growing louder every minute; De Brésac paused, impatient at our awkwardness. He could have got well away had he wished, but he only stood there as we stumbled to our feet, the sound of men crashing through the bushes showing how near were the more fleet-footed of these Spaniards. It was desperate work for heavy men. Off we started once more, De Brésac seizing the arquebus to lighten the burden of Goddard, who was swearing and trying to rub his shin, which he had bruised most severely, with his pike-handle.

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We came to an open space two hundred yards or so in width in which the Indians had planted a field of maize. But the crop had been garnered and only the short stalks remained. The moon had come out and it seemed hardly possible that we could get across this open and escape discovery. Could we but reach the other side where the deeper forest began there would seem to be less chance of immediate capture. Goddard was well-nigh done, but managed to struggle on over the rough loam toward an opening in the bush beyond. De Brésac had passed him and entered the wood, and I had come to his side, when behind us there was a loud shouting and two soldiers, stripped of their armor, emerged from the forest and came toward us at the top of their speed.

De Brésac stopped and dropped down upon one knee, and I knew what he meant to do. Goddard fell almost exhausted beside him and I crouched behind a bush a little to the rear, awaiting the coming of our adversaries. We were all breathing very hard, but De Brésac, full of vitality, was crouched like a cat ready to spring.

"The one in front," said he to me in a whisper, "I will account for the other."

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On the Spaniards came, leaping from one hillock to another, their naked weapons gleaming

fitfully in the moonlight. The fellow in advance was but a boy; his hair was fair and he was comely to see. My heart misgave me as he came nearer, rushing onward fearlessly. But it was his life or mine,—my life and Mademoiselle's, perhaps—and so I did not hesitate, rising just as he came into the shadow of the trees and running him through with such force that the basket hilt of the weapon struck against him and as he fell the blade broke short off against the ground. The other man, seeing the fate of his comrade, paused for a moment; but De Brésac was upon him like a flash and sent his sword a-flying. After all, these lives in the heat of action were few enough against those of all our friends who had been murdered in cold blood before.

Then De Brésac, who was a man of ingenuity, drew the bodies under some bushes and we started off along in the shadow of the woods at the edge of the clearing toward the left—doubling in a way upon our own track to throw our pursuers the more surely off in another direction.

We saw two, and then six more, of them go flying across the clearing, following the track of our boots in the soft earth; but they did not pause, going crashing through and shouting to one another until the sounds were lost in the many voices of the night. We were free—at least for the present.

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We looked around the one to the other, and long breaths burst at the same moment from the three of us.

"Phew! Master Sydney," said Goddard, pulling his beard, which had been glued to his cheeks, "'tis little I thought I'd ever get up in this *dis*-guise, sir. Odds bobs, but I'm done! I've been feedin' up this night, to last a week, sir,—an' me stommick—is somethin' feeble—since—this—smoke—suckin'." He fell to the ground, breathing like a bellows, and vowed he would move no more.

Then De Brésac planned quickly. "If we go to the beach," he said, "they will surely take us. There they can drive us into the sea, or prison us on one of these sand-spits, and take us at their ease. Let us keep among the woods and the swamps. There we can retreat at will, and may support life until we can find a friend, or come to the great inland channel of which they speak. We may come upon the canoes of the Indians of Satouriona, for the Potanous are far to the west, and the Thimagoas of Outina are to the south."

We saw that what he said was wise, for Menendez, now thinking the beach his natural shambles, would certainly try again to find us there.

At any rate, where we were was no comfortable neighborhood, for some stray Spaniard might at any moment be stumbling upon us, and then there would surely be more killing, and I was sick at the sight of blood, and wanted no more of it. So in some fashion, when he had got his breath, we put Goddard on his feet and moved steadily forward, pausing only now and then to listen for the signs of pursuit. In this way we moved for two hours through the moss-hanging forest. We talked but little, having need of all our strength and breath.

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Goddard managed to tell his story. He had been struck upon the head and had fallen for dead under a pile of corpses. When he had come to himself it was dark, and the Spaniards had gone. He had come across the bay at night in a canoe he found at the landing-place. He possessed himself of the arms and weapons of a Spaniard who was sleeping in the woods,—and who sleeps there yet; cutting off the soldier's beard and fastening the hair of it upon himself with tree-gum. Then making a detour, he had come in at nightfall, following in the footsteps of a detachment of the soldiery who had marched down from Fort San Mateo, and in the confusion and debauchery of the camp, by simulating dumbness, escaped detection, taking the sentry duty with little difficulty. It was a most wonderful thing; but Goddard would say little further than this, only smiling when he spoke of the Spaniard in the woods. He took off his morion and mopped the sweat from his brow.

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"Master Sydney, I saw Jem Smith die, sir," he said. "He went to join his martyrs with a smile on his lips. He wore his velvet suit o' black, an' he was beautiful to see. I saw him die, sir,—cut down like a dog afore my eyes. An', sir, I saw the man as did it." He tapped the Spanish morion with a significant gesture, and then grimly,—"'Twas him!"

We had covered a distance of perhaps three leagues when we came to a body of water, which seemed a kind of river, but not so wide as the River of May; only a hundred yards across to the thither bank. There we stopped to plan, for Goddard could not swim. It looked but a short time before the day, for the heavens were brightening through the great trees behind us. If we could place Job Goddard upon the trunk of a tree, then we might push him across the stream; there was one floating out in the current. De Brésac had removed his boots to swim for it, and had even taken a step down into the slime of the bank, when, as we looked, the log began sluggishly to move, but against the current, and then we saw the thing was alive. De Brésac rushed out upon high ground in terror, for the log was no log at all, but one of those great horny lizards, which Admiral Hawkins has since reported, and which are called *crocodiles*, or *alligartos*. If the Spaniards had come upon us at that moment, they could have taken us without a fight, for this beast was of such a great size and length, so ugly moreover and slimy, that we stood with knees trembling upon the bank. But by and by Job Goddard, plucking his courage up, cast a stone at it, and as the missile fell in the water the great beast, with a flurry and a splash of its tail, went plowing down the stream more frightened even than we.

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The heavens were well alight before we could persuade ourselves to make the attempt to cross. Sure at last that there was no fording place, we three got astride of a wide log and began the passage of this treacherous stream, expecting each moment to have a leg nipped off at the knee. We had long pieces of bark for paddles, and made a great commotion, thinking thus to scare

these monstrous animals away; and finally we arrived upon the other bank, wet, and trembling with fright, but safe.

Upon the third day the Chevalier shot at a furry wild animal which lay in a ball at the top of a tree. He had the skill to carry away the twig on which it swung. The beast fell to the ground snarling like a dog, to be killed in a trice by Goddard, who pinned it to the earth with his pike. We were most hungry and fell to upon this beast like wolves, hardly waiting for the flesh to be cooked through. 'Twas little enough, but kept us alive two days. On the morning of the fifth day we saw the great inland channel, which we afterwards discovered was a part of the River of May, and by good fortune came upon a hunting party of Satouriona's warriors. I have said that we came upon them, but it were more truthful to say that they came upon us. For an arrow whirred past and we looked around to see half a score of them coming from the thicket. I held up my hand, shouting loudly "*Antipola! Antipola bonnasson!*"—which means "friend"—and they came forward and welcomed us with great rejoicing. They fed us on game which they had shot with arrows, and took us at last in a canoe to their village. I had seen the Paracousi—the "Chief,"—when we first came to Fort Caroline. He was named Emola and entertained us in his lodge, sparing nothing for our comfort.

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De Brésac was tireless. Liberty was breath to his nostrils, and he went about in the village inquiring and planning, making ready to continue our pilgrimage to the coast when we should be rested.

For myself, with liberty came a reaction from those horrible days and nights upon the ship, on the sand-spit and in the prison, when in my deeper moods of despair I could see no hope to bring Mademoiselle out of this country alive. In spite of the continuous dread at my heart, there had come again in all its first eagerness the desire only to find her and take her in my arms away from that dreadful Menendez, the very nearness of whom befouled and polluted. I was certain of but one thing—that she was not at San Augustin. Had she been there, in those last days De Baçan would have lost no opportunity to bring us together for his own pleasure, that he might gloat upon us the better and keep his promise of torture to me. But where could she be? What had happened that she was not a prisoner of De Baçan? For it seemed certain that she had been saved from Fort Caroline. I was in a great quandary, and for all my uncertainty I had not the will even to question the Indians upon the subject, for in spite of my hopes I feared—feared the truth they might tell me.

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We sat about the lodge of this good Emola, looking out at the bright forest, gaining back our strength and will. Well do I remember that wonderful day with its great stillness and sadness. The Paracousi sat by the open doorway, dark against the golden sunshine, smoking from a great tobacco bowl which he offered to us one after the other. We each took a swallow of it, this being the habit of these people when in good will, and Goddard, bringing forth his own bowl and reed, helped himself from the pouch of Emola and was soon puffing away valiantly to the great satisfaction of the Chief. It was most curious to see these two sucking upon the reeds like babes upon the breast, and puffing out the smoke in curls and rings, regarding each other the while with great solemnity.

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"Ye see, Master Sydney," said Goddard between puffs, "if once I can get me stommick made good against the smoke suckin', 'twill be a most gratifyin' achievin'. For though we may find an' win no new lands—by the beards of the martyrs, 'tis surely somethin' we have done to make the discovery of a new habitude, or taste, which has much of the vartue an' little of the inconveniency of drinkin'."

I could not but smile at this sally, for things most ridiculous have a way of intruding themselves upon the most sad and melancholy moments of life.

"To-morrow we will push onward to the sea,—is it not so?" asked De Brésac abruptly.

This brought me to myself.

"I am most uncertain, monsieur," I replied. "I hardly know in which way my duty or desire lies. I have felt to this moment as though my greatest wish were to find my way back to Europe and set the armies of all civilized nations about the ears of this devil Menendez de Avilés. But now that I am free—well, monsieur—I will tell you."

Whereupon I told him briefly of the love I bore for Diane de la Notte, of the hope I had of her escape from death and of my fears for her safety, saying at the last that I could not leave the vicinity of San Augustin until I was sure that she was not in the power of Diego de Baçan.

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As I told my story his face saddened. "I suspected as much," he said. "There is a great bond between us, monsieur; I too have loved—the sister of La Caille was my betrothed. When she died, I vowed I would look no more upon the face of woman, and so I came here to this savage land to lose my sorrow in adventure and perhaps in death. And I have come only to lose him I loved best after his sister." He spoke of La Caille. "No, monsieur, I cannot forget—and it is fated that I shall not die. That is my story."

I wrung him silently by the hand.

"Monsieur, monsieur," he went on quickly, "there is a duty which you and I owe to our God—a duty stronger than any earthly tie. A foul deed has been done which has no equal in the history of the world." He paused a moment. "Forgive me if I seem to bring more grief to your heart. But I know that there is no chance upon this earth to see again the one you love. Believe me, what I say is true. It is the love that is in your heart which makes you wilful not to ask and to believe the thing you most dread."

I buried my face in my hands, for it was so and I was a coward.

"Monsieur, listen," he continued softly. "Do not blind yourself further to these facts. For you will but add one more life to those which have already been recklessly thrown away. And with your doubts at rest, your life should be given to Justice."

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"Ah, but my heart can never again be satisfied until I have found her!"

"Then I must tell you the truth, mon ami, whatever may come. I have spoken with these Indians in such manner as it was possible, and I know most of the things that have happened since the massacre. I have seen articles which came from the Fort, and I know that there are no women there at this time. Many of them were cut down and killed. A few only were taken towards San Augustin; with them was Mademoiselle de la Notte."

I started up. "Diane—and how——"

"Ah, monsieur! calm yourself and listen with a stout heart—for I have dreadful news. She was of a party of women. There were Spanish soldiers with them. When these women got to a certain place they would go no further. The soldiers then killed them as they had done the others."

"But this is mere hazard—how do you know? What proofs have you?" I cried in anguish.

"Only this," he said solemnly; "I have myself beheld it and you will know." And going to Emola he made a motion towards his hand. The Paracousi produced from his belt a bit of gold and De Brésac placed it in my hands. It was the finger ring with the ancient setting which Diane had worn!

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I took the bauble from him silently, stupidly, and then unconsciously bore it to my lips. Slowly the cruel truth dawned upon me as I looked at the jewel. It seemed as though my breast were bursting with the emotions that flooded up from that secret corner in my soul in which man hides the things he holds most holy. What would I not have given for woman's tears to have wept out upon it all the tenderness in my heart? I could only bend over it reverently, dry-eyed, mutely suffering. But I had undergone all this torture before, and the certainty now that she had died seemed to make no further enduring wound. I sat at last, looking at Emola as he told how the ring had come to him from one of his braves, who had exchanged it for some silver neck-pieces. After the first shock of this dreadful discovery, I seemed rather stupefied than aught else, with no capacity for great grief nor any great sensation of any kind.

When he understood, the Paracousi came and put his hand upon my shoulder, and this aroused me. He indicated by pointing that he would give me the ring which I still held in my hand. I thanked him with a look and a hand-clasp and got upon my feet, stretching my limbs, arising from my grief-stupor.

When he had finished speaking I turned to the Chevalier De Brésac, saying to him:

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"My friend, I will follow wherever you will lead."

He took me by one hand joyfully, and Job Goddard with gruff heartiness seized the other. Then we three, of no religion, but made one by suffering and the loss of those three persons we loved the best, took an oath, with the grave Paracousi for witness, that not while we lived would we rest until we had seen our enemies visited with vengeance by fire and the sword.

CHAPTER XVII.

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IN WHICH WE JOURNEY TO PARIS.

If I have dwelt upon these events hitherto with great particularity, it is that there might be a record of all that passed and that the devotion of this seaman Goddard, a yeoman of England, should be known to all men. Of the Chevalier de Brésac, I need say nothing further at this time, since his public service is well known alike in England and France.

Upon the morning following my discovery of the ring with the ancient setting, we entered one of the great war canoes in company with the Paracousi Emola and eight warriors, and set forth upon our journey to the sea. There was nothing to fear from the Spaniards, for the camp of Emola was in the country of Satouriona, and until we came again within sight of the battlements of Fort San Mateo, there was little danger of discovery; and even had we been attacked we should have been able to give a good account of ourselves. The River of May for a long distance was shallow, but of a great width and seemed like a vast morass. At noon on the following day we set into a current which speedily took us into a deeper channel, where the sand grasses no longer waved beside us. The paddles dipped deep and, as they sent the water gurgling musically astern, put us along down-stream at a fair brave rate.

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By and by the Indians told us that Fort San Mateo was but four leagues below; and, as it lacked an hour to sunset, we hauled in our canoe to the bank to await the friendly cover of night before resuming our journey to the sea. But there was little need for precaution, for we saw no sign of human life. We stole along the shadow of the western shore, drifting down with the tide, which was ebbing strongly. At some time after midnight the sound of men's voices singing a rough chorus came up to us on the wind; and in a while we crept out from behind a point of land to see the lights of Fort San Mateo, lurid and garish, come dancing down to us across the face of the

star-sprinkled waters. The Spaniards were making merry, and the hoarse sound of their laughter blasphemed the sweetness of the night, and shivered the silence again and again with its echoes. They had no fear of attack. Had they not swept out of existence a whole nation from these new shores? We saw no sentries upon the bastions even, and passed fairly under the cannon, arousing no challenge or inquiry. When we had passed below the Fort, a desperate sadness fell upon me again at the sight of the familiar shore and hills at which she and I had looked together. I turned my head and looked back as I had on that morning when we went down to the sea to give battle to the Spaniards. I seemed to see her standing there again upon the battlements tall and lithe, looking fearlessly up at me as I told her my fears. The farewell, the tender tears in her eyes, the touch of her fingers, all—all were as real as though it had been but yesterday instead of two long months ago,—months of suffering which had made days into weeks and weeks into years. The pain came again fiercely to my breast and I caught my breath to ease it. The firm fingers of De Brésac closed upon my own as he whispered.

“Courage, mon brave! Courage!”

Ah me! The meaning of the travails through which we are brought to our better understanding are little known of men—nor will be through many generations of time. In a moment or so the pang was past, and in a sudden flash of unreason—Nature’s compensation for her sorrows—I felt again as I had felt before, that Mademoiselle was at that moment somewhere near—not cold in death—but breathing and living. All this in spite of the ring, the silent evidence of the truth of what had been spoken, which I felt at every breath, against my heart.

We had passed a little below the Fort and had drifted toward a bluff of dunes which jutted out into the stream almost athwart our course—for here the channel runs close to the shore. Upon this point grew a thatch of palmetto scrub and knot of stunted firs and pines, whose gnarled branches stretched this way and that, an impenetrable black tangle against the starlit sky. As we came nearer, the dark blur of the branches took a definite form, and we could mark their gentle sway in the breeze. We were bearing toward a sand bar which jutted well out toward the other shore and I would have spoken of it; but as I turned, Emola seized me by the arm, placing his hand upon his mouth in token of silence. He and the warriors were craning their heads toward the out-spreading branches. They sat mute as statues, saying no word. I could not make it out. Long as I stared I saw no sign or heard no movement save the rhythm of the swaying branches.

The silence was broken by one of the Indians beside me who uttered a hoarse sound in his throat, and lifting his head he passed his index finger grimly around his neck. We drifted in again with the current, and in a moment we understood. There, a horrid plaything for the wind of the sea, its clothing limp and loose, we saw a human body, swinging by the neck!

De Brésac started up. “Par la Mort!” he cried. “The infamous ones! Honest braves, fighting for their King, to be given this dog’s death! Come, Emola, land us here. It is too much, mon ami! He shall not hang so!” He was almost sobbing with the stress of his emotion.

The paddles swept us in to the beach and we climbed the dunes to where the body was hung. Over its head that villain had nailed a piece of white bark upon which had been burned the dreadful confession,

*“Not As To Frenchmen
But As To Lutherans!”*

Tenderly, as though he had been one of those we three most deeply mourned, we cut him down and tried to straighten his poor stiffened limbs. Then we carried him where the sand was soft and with the canoe paddles buried him out of sight. There were others, we knew, for the placard had said it, and three more we saw hung in the same way and bearing the same inscription. These we cut down and buried as we had buried the first, while Emola and his warriors stood by and gravely watched. Then silently as though the hand of death were upon our own hearts, we entered the canoe again and pushed onward.

The tide had turned; but before dawn we had come well within the sound of the surf and pulled into a secluded river or creek on the north bank, before the sun had come out of the sea. We ate a portion of dried venison apiece, and concealing the canoe among the branches, cut into the thicket, Goddard carrying a large packet of tobacco which the Paracousi had given him. By marching steadily all the morning along the line of this river, we came by noon to another body of water as large as the River of May. Here we halted again, and to our surprise and great joy discovered a small vessel riding securely at anchor, and flying the flag of France!

There is no need to dwell at length upon the events which followed. The vessel was the *Epervier*, Captain Gillonne, of the fleet of poor Ribault. After much signaling a boat was lowered from her side and many men armed with arquebus and pike dropped down into her. They approached within thirty yards of the shore, when we proved to them by word of mouth that we were no Spaniards but men of their own company. Then they brought their boat in upon the beach and welcomed us with great rejoicing. The *Epervier* had been upon the sea for many weeks, and blown to the southward, had ridden through the fury of the storm which had sent the other vessels upon the coast. The Frenchmen had seen the wrecks upon the beach, but no man save a few soldiers in armor carrying a standard of Spain. They had come to the River of May only to find our Fort in the hands of the enemy and had much to do to escape to the open sea again, out of range of the Spanish ordnance. This gallant Gillonne, watchful against the Spaniards, remained warily at anchor, hoping by this delay to save any Frenchman who might have escaped, although he thus placed himself in direst jeopardy of capture by the Spanish fleet.

It seemed, then, that most of our physical sufferings were to end. We went aboard the “great

canoe" as the Paracousi called it, Captain Gillonne setting red wine before these Indians, which indeed they drank with as much avidity as Job Goddard himself. They walked about the vessel looking up at the rigging, speaking among themselves, though they made no outward sign of curiosity, surprise or any other emotion. They are a strange people, these Caribs; haughty, and solitary as the great pines which tower in their wild forests. The good Paracousi was given many gifts to carry back to his people. He bore messages of good will from the French to the great Satouriona, and we three who had been his guests shook him by the hand and smoked a pipe of peace, which Goddard brought forth from beneath his doublet. The chief and his warriors departed to the shore as gravely and silently as they had come.

The people of the *Epervier* all sickened for the sight of France; and the provisions being low, it was at last decided to set sail. There was small chance of finding other refugees and the danger of capture was imminent, depending only upon discovery. And so we hoisted our anchor in the morning and with a brisk wind sailed forth from that harbor into the open sea, seeing no Spanish ships and making a clear run to the eastward out of land-sight by evening. Of the trials of that voyage I will not speak, since the matter is one having no importance in the description of these events. It is enough that after many weeks of storm and stress, privation and suffering, we had a fight with a Spanish vessel, but being weak-handed were glad enough to get secure away. A sickness broke out among our men, but we landed at last, worn by adversity, at Rochelle in France. [226]

As before written, I make no attempt to justify my actions in the happenings which followed. Thrust by ill-fortune out of employment, I had made this quarrel my own. And the love which had changed me for the nonce from man to god had now turned me devil. A new glory had shone into my life for a short hour and made me all resplendent with its gold—but the light had gone out and the darkness hung like a pall about my soul. I could not reason but with relation to the dark thoughts which filled my mind. I thirsted for vengeance upon Menendez and Diego de Baçan, and there was no slaking. Nor could I understand that I, a quiet-tempered English lad, had turned adventurer like a Moor or a Spaniard. It was the tame stable-dog made wolfish by the sight of blood. I have said much of the cruelty of the Spaniards, but as I look back upon those dreadful times and the more dreadful ones which followed, I know that I was as mad as the others and that we were no instruments of God—as, to ease our consciences, we said we were,—but only the willing tools of our own passions. [227]

Truly the Chevalier de Brésac was animated by much the same spirit as myself. For upon French soil he proved himself a man of resource. The roads were blocked with snow, but friends in Rochelle made our journey to Paris possible; and in the middle of the month of December we rode into that city by the Porte St. Marcel. De Brésac was a fine horseman and I had been bred to ride long before I took to a sailor's life, but it was no tranquil riding for Job Goddard. The beasts were of the quietest, but even so he found it no easy matter to keep upright in the saddle, and was three times tossed into the snow drifts, from which he emerged swearing and vowing that he would ride no more.

"'Tis worse than the weather top-gallant yardarm in a cross-chop, Master Sydney," he would say, "an' never a lift or handful o' sail to hang on by. For d'ye see, sir, this craft will mind no helm but the fore sheets, and 'tis mighty poor sailin' in a squall." He bore so rueful a countenance that we laughed at him in spite of ourselves, and by dint of much persuading and lifting he was got each time again in the saddle. [228]

Once within the gates of Paris we rode straightway to the house of M. Henri de Teligny, the uncle of my good friend. He was a fine, bristly, red-visaged, gallant figure of a man; an old soldier, a man of much power and, as we soon learned, with a leaning to the cause of the Huguenots. He welcomed the Chevalier with every mark of affection, and after bidding us to the hospitality of his house, caused refreshments to be brought and plied his nephew with questions as to his adventures in New France. It had been the intention of De Brésac to approach him with some care and niceness upon matters of religion and to bring out an expression upon the tale before enlisting his sympathies in our cause. Therefore, he at first was guarded in his replies, using a very skilful diplomacy. But when he had at last fairly begun, the old man listened to the story of the massacres of Fort Caroline and San Augustin with undisguised horror. He had heard rumors from Spain that the French colony was destroyed. He had not entirely believed it; but, were it true, victory had been gained by honorable war and not by criminal deceit. He could not remain quiet through the telling of the real tale and strode up and down the chamber pulling at his gray mustaches and venting himself in the loudest expressions of wrath and sorrow. When the Chevalier had come to the voyage in the canoe and the discovery of the swinging bodies over which the legends had been placed, he could contain himself no longer. [229]

"Jarnichien!" he shouted. "Hung like a pirate or a Marane! Par la Pâque Dieu! It is a stain upon the honor—not of Coligny—but of France! These Spaniards think that this New World was made only for themselves and that no other living man has a right to move or breathe there!"

"Would even that justify the murder of French women and children, my General?" returned the Chevalier keenly.

"La Dogue! I should say, no! You were gentlemen of France with a patent from your King to settle in this Terre aux Bretons, which is as much the property of France as of Spain."

"Since this Colomb first set foot upon the land the Spanish claim it all. Menendez has said it."

"And that all others are Moors or piratos, to have their throats slit like hogs or be hung like thieves? Ah! perhaps even in Spain there is justice for such Generals as Menendez de Avilés! This [230]

is the King's quarrel, mes garçons, not yours. Forquevaulx is our Ambassador to Madrid. I know him well. We have fought side by side in siege and field. He too is a soldier and knows what a soldier's death, as well as his life, should be. This is murder—assassination, I tell you—of the foulest kind! Done openly, and not even Philip of Spain could countenance it. Forquevaulx shall demand the degradation of this man."

He paused, out of breath and countenance from rapid speaking. Here truly was a friend indeed; we had not counted upon such a valiant partisan.

"The Admiral shall know of these facts at once. I will go to him—or better—he shall come to me. The Hôtel de Châtillon and the Louvre have ears and my house is my fortress, mes garçons, where all obey me. There are no spies here."

When he had composed himself, he sat and addressed a letter to Coligny, acquainting him with our arrival and asking him to come secretly under the cover of night. The publicity of an audience at the Hôtel de Châtillon could thus be avoided and M. de Teligny did not doubt that, in view of the importance of the matter, the Admiral would come with all haste.

The Chevalier de Brésac was tireless. He worked with a nervous energy which was most astonishing in one of his slender frame. For my part I was glad enough to seek some rest; for my ride of many miles upon the back of a horse, my first journey of the kind for years, had made me more stiff and sore than when I had fought Don Diego de Baçan. Goddard had long since been put to bed below stairs. While I lay upon a couch, De Brésac wrote steadily; seeking to place on record, in some sort of order, the argument and statement of the case for the Admiral. As he had aroused Henri de Teligny, so he hoped to arouse Coligny; though from what I knew of the man I had little thought that this would be hard to do. [231]

That night the Chevalier de Brésac repeated our story to Gaspard de Coligny. The great Admiral had thrown off his mask and cloak and sat in a straight high-backed chair before the fire. He was dressed solemnly enough in a suit of black, with boots and slashed trunks. He wore a rolling collar or kind of ruff; and a gold chain of fine workmanship, the symbol of his rank, hung about his neck and down his doublet. In stature he was tall, though he seemed less so by reason of his head being somewhat bowed in thought. His forehead was lofty and wrinkled, but marked rather by the weather than by the ravages of time. His hair was plentiful but was cut short, standing straight upon his head. A pointed white beard fell down upon his breast. His hands grasped the straight arms of the chair as he looked forward into the fire. His eyes, though clear and alert like those of a hawk and seeming to look not at but through, had yet an expression of sadness rather than severity. The light of the fire, which was thrown up from below, shone upon the cheek-bones and marked the deeper the hollows below. At one corner of the mouth was a great scar half-hidden by the mustache—a relic of Montcontour—which made him to appear still more gaunt and hollow-eyed. It was the face of a keen, daring man, but not that of a cruel or even a vengeful one. [232]

The Chevalier stood a little to one side opposite him, leaning lightly against the chimney-piece. As he proceeded with the story the Admiral's hands gripped the chair-arms the harder and he chewed nervously upon a toothpick, which he had put into his mouth. For the most part he sat quiet, saying no word; but when he heard of the promise of Menendez for safe conduct as prisoners of war, he could contain himself no longer. He got upon his feet, walking up and down, asking short questions the while to complete his view. De Brésac told all that had happened much as I have related it here, save only the parts which are intimate and personal to me. When he described the patience and martyrdom of Ribault and the others and the manner in which they had met their doom, Coligny raised his hands to his brow, saying as though to himself, [233]

"It is not possible—not possible! I cannot believe it!" asking questions until all doubt of the barbarity had been removed from his mind. "It is horrible!" he said. "Horrible, even now when assassination is so much the fashion that it is the argument of the fool and the wise alike."

When De Brésac had finished, having spoken of the good conduct of those who were lost and the probable position of the survivors—were there any—the Admiral remained silent awhile looking into the fire, his hands clinched and his brows knit in a tangled frown. He had quite forgotten us; for his mind was fixed upon the bearing of this news upon matters of State. No word was spoken and the only sound in that great chamber was the crackling of the logs upon the hearth. We saw by the look upon his face how deep was his interest in the fate of his poor colony, and we saw how the melancholy was driven from his eyes by the expression of stern resolve which suddenly fixed his features. It was like watching a hericano drive up over a windy sea.

After a while he put again in rapid succession a number of questions upon facts unconsidered by De Brésac, which would have a certain diplomatic value at the Court of Madrid. It was far into the night when he had done, and he made no further statement and gave no opinion of any kind save at the end, when his men had been called and he was about to draw on his cloak. [234]

"A great crime has been committed against duly-constituted officers of France, my friends," he said gravely. "It is a matter in which the honor of the King is concerned. It may not be overlooked, and God alone knows what may come. You are to speak no word of this affair, but must wait in readiness to be called to audience with the King. You have done well, Monsieur de Brésac. Good night, messieurs! Monsieur de Teligny, good night."

And so saying he disappeared down the stairway and out a street door, muffling himself as he went.

De Brésac turned to me, his eyes glittering and his lips set in a grim smile of triumph. "We shall have vengeance upon them,—yes, we shall have vengeance!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

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THE POET KING.

Not for two weeks did we have word or sign from Admiral de Coligny; but at last a messenger came speedily for De Brésac, who followed in haste to the Hôtel de Châtillon. The Admiral sought further information. Then there was another long silence and our impatience was not diminished when the report of the massacre got abroad and a rumor came from Madrid that a vessel had reached Spain from San Augustin and that the messengers of Menendez to King Philip had been received with great good will and circumstance. I wished this business brought to a favorable conclusion, but if naught were to come of it, I longed to justify myself before Captain Hooper and would rather have sought other employment at the Pelican in Plymouth than to dilly-dally at the French Court.

Yet what we saw and learned in this great city of Paris was most instructive. Through the good offices of M. de Telnigny, and of Coligny, I had been enabled to renew my costume; and Goddard had been given a purse well-lined with pistoles, out of which he had bought himself from a dealer in cast-off garments a most gaudy vesture of red and yellow velvet and silk, these being the colors most to his liking. He had a gray, high-pointed hat, of a bygone fashion, ornamented with a wide-flowing plume; the breeches were most capacious and trimmed with ribbons; the stockings were gray and the shoes were high, ornamented with great flame-colored rosettes. His sword was of a most prodigious length, and though hooked well up by his shoulder straps, clanked and clattered upon the paving stones like that of a swaggerer of the Reiters. Much of the time he spent below in the courtyard smoking and conversing with La Chastro, the body-servant of our host, a roystering man-at-arms who, second only to Goddard himself, had the most voluble proficiency in camp language I had ever heard. There upon a bench in the sun the two of them would sit during most of the day, the one rolling out his roundest, mouth-filling speech, which the other would set in some fashion into a language of his own. Goddard had soon cut his hair short in the prevailing fashion, and by the end of a week his upper lip was blue with stubble which, with elbow aloft, he vainly strove to stroke and twist after the manner of the *raffinés* he had seen coming from the *levee*. When I, marveling and curious at his wonderful jerkin and shadowy lip, called him to me and asked him how it was that he was turning frog-eater upon so short occasion, he sent a great whiff of smoke from his pipe, saying,

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"'Tis a wench, sir,—a most comely wench who vows that 'til I grow a beard upon my face, she will have none of me. 'A man without hair upon his face,' says she, 'is like a pasty without truffles.' What think you of that for a saucy minx?"

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I went off to the fencing hall. Here Pompée, the maître d'armes to the King, sometimes gave a showing of his art; and I picked up one or two tricks of fence on the use of the dagger and had much interest in some strokes which had come newly into vogue at court. Once when we were returning thence, we came to a small hostel before the door of which a crowd had gathered. From within there was a babel of voices and much laughter. A familiar odor saluted my nostrils, for there was Job Goddard teaching mine host the art of smoking. That 'twas not altogether to the fancy of that worthy was readily to be seen by the grimaces he made and the groans which he let forth from his throat. But La Chastro was behind him, the point of his rapier touching the wide breeches, prodding at intervals between the puffs to spur his energy. Goddard, with his tall plume waving in the air, was standing in front of him holding the reed within his lips and saying,

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"Suck,—suck my little pasty-flipper! Thus only you may learn the virtues of the tabac. 'Tis none so sweet as malvoisie, eh, my little wine-bibber?" then, leaning forward, imitating the grimaces of the rogue.

"Ventre de loup!" roared La Chastro. "So! you do not like us to make a smoke in your house—eh? You say we shall not! Quarrelsome little pig that you are! Bah! Now puff! puff! puff!"—and each time came a new prod in the breeches, making mine host to writhe the more, though he puffed and clung to the pipe which Job Goddard held, as though death alone could separate them.

"*Parbleu!*" said Goddard, "puff, and puff again! 'Twill make ye proof against the plague,—and other things. Also it is of much benefit to the manners, taking away all fretting an' excitement. 'Tis a way we have among the Caribs, when all is in agreement. The pipe of peace is what ye smoke, me lad. When 'tis finished, no more discussion will there be atween us."

But the little man had no further humor for discussion of any kind, for he turned the color of lead, and, putting his two hands upon his wide paunch in dismay, he spat forth the pipe and dashed frantically back among his pots and pans, La Chastro aiding his departure with the toe of his boot.

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The on-lookers roared with merriment, and Goddard blew out some marvelous smoke rings from his lungs, to the great delight of the wondering crowd.

So, after all, there was much to amuse and entertain. M. de Telnigny took us out upon the streets at the hour of the afternoon when the world was abroad, pointing out to us those of the

courtiers who were closest in the councils of the King. He showed us the beauties,—and their lovers—and told us the number of duels fought over each, and how, the greater the number, the greater the fame of the lady. Here was one favorite who numbered her duels in the twenties; and there another poor creature for whom but four men had fought, and no person been killed. We saw little Comminges, Prince of *raffinés*, who had more deaths to his credit—or debit—than any man in France. He had once taken a man out to the Prè-aux-clerics. When they had uncloaked, he had said to his cavalier, “Are you not Berny of Auvergne?” “No,” says the other, “I am Villequier from Normandy.” “’Tis a pity to have been mistaken,” said Comminges, “but I have challenged you, and of course we must fight.” And he killed him with a beautiful feint and thrust in tierce. We passed the house of René the Florentine, the poisoner for Catherine de Medicis. We saw Thoré de Montmorency, “Little Captain Burn-the-Benches”; His Grace the “Archbishop of Bottles,” who by reason of the early hour was still walking with much steadiness; the Count de Rochefoucauld, nicknamed the “Cabbage Killer,” who had ordered his arquebusiers to cut a plot of cabbages to pieces, his poor sight taking them for lanzknechts. There the Tuileries, just a-building; and here the Louvre, where the King and the Queen-mother were holding court. Once we saw the royal cavalcade returning from the hunt at the Château de Madrid, and the jerkin of the King was covered with blood, it being his delight to kill the stag with his own hands.

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He seemed a young man fairly well set together, but with a head put somewhat low and awkwardly between his shoulders, the neck craning forward unpleasantly, giving a lowering look to a figure otherwise agreeable. As to his face, the forehead protruded, and heavy ridges above the eyes gave notice of a high temper; the nose was thick, and the upper lip protruded, while the lower one fell away. The eyes seemed of a greenish hue, and shifted from this side to that; the skin pale yellow, which showed the habitual derangement to which he was prey. But it was not a harsh face—only stupid and wistful—truthful, upon the whole, but weak; most unlike Catharine, who once rode beside him—that Jezebel from Italy, who thought that to be honest was to be a fool.

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It was well into the month of January before word came again from Coligny summoning us to the Louvre. We knew that long communications had been sent by both Charles and Catherine de Medicis to Forquevaux, at Madrid, asking reparation for the slaughter at San Augustin. The Duke d’Alava the Spanish Ambassador at Paris, had replied for his sovereign that Philip considered the French colonists pirates and intruders upon the domains of Spain, and that there could be no reparation. The position of Admiral Coligny was unchanged, and there, so far as we knew, the affair rested. Now however, we should perhaps learn something more. The summons from Coligny excited hope.

De Brésac and I, with M. de Teligny, passed by way of the Rue d’Averon and the Rue St. Germain l’Auxerrois to the Louvre, over the moat and through a stone arch into a great courtyard. The place was alive with men in armor, but M. de Teligny, having the entrée, was well known to the cornet of the guard, and we walked up the wide stairs to the Audience Chamber, where most of the general business of the King, Queen-mother or the Admiral was carried forward. The names of M. de Teligny and of De Brésac having been passed by the gentlemen in waiting, we were presently shown into the anteroom of his Majesty’s apartments, where Gaspard de Coligny was awaiting us.

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He bore a most serious countenance as, dismissing those about him, he arose to greet us. “The King is within,” he said, “and I have wished him to see and speak with M. de Brésac and M. Killigrew. M. d’Alava has been here this morning and there is news from Madrid.”

Not knowing what was desired of us, we entered the King’s apartment after the great Admiral and stood inside the curtains. The room had more the appearance of an armory than of an audience chamber, for about the walls there hung halberds, pikes, spears, hunting horns, knives and arquebuses; while upon the floor were saddles, a morion and breastpieces, and a wolf-trap which his Majesty had but just devised. Foils and masks lay upon a chair by the chimney-piece, before which a great staghound bitch lay sleeping upon the hearth-rug. Here it was that the King took his fencing lessons with M. Pompée and wrote verses with M. Ronsard.

His Majesty, his back toward the door, sat before a table covered with books and papers, hawk-bells and nets. He was leaning over, his elbow upon a book, his chin in his hand, while his eyes in deep thought were cast upward toward the ceiling. So deeply engrossed was he upon the verses he was writing that he was not aware of our presence until the Admiral, waiting a moment, went forward and spoke.

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The King started from his reverie.

“Sire,” said Coligny.

“Ah, mon père,” he exclaimed, rising and stretching forward a hand. “It is you? I was in a fine poetic frenzy, was I not?”

“Your Majesty has a ready gift.”

“Come, my Plato,” said he joyously, “you shall be the judge of how this couplet runs:

“Pour maintenir la foy
Je suis belle et fidele.”

“But your Majesty——”

“Aux ennemies du roy

"'Tis for a new arquebus, monsieur, which the armorer has made me. Think you not it has a glittering ring?"

"Your Majesty, Ronsard himself could not have invented better. But this morning——"

"Think you so?"

"Sire, I have come this morning upon a State matter of great importance."

Charles dropped back into his chair.

"Matters of State! Matters of Court! Can I never get away from this confusion?"

The Admiral paused a moment, motioning us forward.

"Sire, there is news from Madrid to-day, and these are the gentlemen whom you wished to see, M. de Brésac, M. Killigrew and M. de Teligny."

For the first time the King looked around toward us, smiling.

"Ah, M. de Teligny, I thought you boar-hunting in the South."

"I did not go, Sire. A touch of the wound I had at Havre."

"I have a great desire to hunt in the South." And then petulantly, "Well, well, mon père, what is it this morning?"

"The matter of these Huguenots in Florida, Sire."

"I thought it would be upon some matter of religious concern," he muttered with a flash of ill-humor. "Catholic and Huguenot,—Huguenot and Catholic,—I am sick of you both." Then seeing that Coligny, looking at his papers, remained grave and silent, the King sighed deeply and seized the Admiral impetuously by the hand.

"Pardon, my brave Counselor. What is it that you will?"

"Your Majesty, this news from Madrid is serious. In spite of your Majesty's request of Philip of Spain, M. d'Alava has replied for the second time that the blame of this massacre is upon the Huguenots themselves. He says that the view of his Majesty of Spain is that the blood of these Frenchmen is upon the soul of Coligny, Admiral of France, and that he, and he alone, should be punished."

"You!—Impossible!"

"Sire, you shall see. Here are other communications. One from Forquevaulx, one from other survivors of the colony, and one from relatives of the slain. Our Ambassador but repeats what D'Alava has said and writes that so pleased is His Majesty of Spain with the acts of this Menendez de Avilés, that he has conferred upon him the title of Marquis of Florida."

"Foi de gentilhomme! It cannot be so!" said the King.

"It is as I have said, your Majesty. The first Spanish ship to arrive in the Biscayan ports brought some of the officers of San Augustin, and they are to-day the heroes of the hour in the Spanish capital. They also hold certain prisoners who were spared from the massacre, and these too have petitioned you to secure their release. They are held as pirates, which, as your Majesty well knows, they are not."

"Jour de Dieu!" shouted Charles, rising to his feet. "I myself gave this commission under my own private seal. It is an insult which my brother of Spain offers me, messieurs, an insult—to honor so highly a man who murders my people!" He walked up and down the floor, his hands behind him, his brow clouded, the picture of resolution. Then by a curious inconsistency, he leaned over the stag-hound which followed him, patting it on the head and saying, "Is it not so, Lisette?" as though matters of State had vanished from his memory.

Coligny turned impatiently.

"Sire, I have also the narration of other survivors and I would have you talk with M. de Brésac."

"Yes, yes, by all means let us hear M. de Brésac." Whereupon, following the direction of the Admiral, Brésac told again of the day upon the sand-spit before the massacre, when Menendez had given Jean Ribault his promise, under seal, to hold us as honorable prisoners of war; of our desperate condition, of the surrender and of the martyrdom.

Through it all the King sat nervously pulling at his pen and looking at us, his eyes shifting uneasily from the one to the other. Before the tale was far advanced he had the appearance of one most *ennuyé* who wished to have the audience at an end at the soonest possible convenience. That he and the Admiral had been grievously and publicly insulted was a matter most apparent; and yet all signs of anger had disappeared from his manner, which was now that of a lad awkward and ill at ease in the presence of a company whose thoughts and mission he could not comprehend. Doubtless Coligny understood his mood better than we, but for my part he seemed but as a child to deal with the great national disgrace which was pending upon him if this disagreement with the King of Spain could not be set speedily aright. But suddenly, the horror of the deception came upon him as it had upon M. de Teligny. A phrase or a gesture of De Brésac caught his attention, and he sprang to his feet in the intensity of passion, striding up and down again, saying over and over,

"It is monstrous! It is monstrous!"

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He stopped as suddenly by the side of Coligny, putting his hand upon the Admiral's shoulder. When the Chevalier finished, he said: "It is well, M. de Brésac, you have served the Admiral well—and you, M. Killigrew. You may be sure that this matter is not ended here." And then to Coligny, "Did you not say, mon père, that there were other reports of this unfortunate colony?"

"Yes, sire, and I will read."

He seated himself and began, while Brésac and I, uncertain whether the survivors were of the ships or of the fort, strained forward to listen.

It was the narrative of Nicholas Challeux, the carpenter. He spoke at some length of the happenings within the fort and of the attack by the Spaniards which came at an early hour in the morning—at dawn in a driving rain-storm. He himself was surprised going to his duty, with naught but a clasp-knife in his hand. Seeing no other means of escape he turned his back and leaped over the palisade. [248]

"I know not how it was," said he, "unless by the grace of God, that my strength was redoubled, old man as I am and gray-headed, a thing which I could not have done at any other time, for the rampart was raised eight or nine feet.... Having then lost all hope of seeing our men rally, I resigned all my senses to the Lord. Recommending myself to His mercy, grace and favor, I threw myself into the wood, for it seemed to me that I could find no greater cruelty among the savage beasts than that which I had seen shown toward our people.... By and by I came upon the old crossbow-maker, who was hiding in terror among some bushes, with two gentlewomen, Madame de la Notte and her daughter——"

"Diane!"

I started forward, with a cry which I could not restrain. It seemed as though all my life-blood was ebbing out of my finger-ends.

De Brésac put a hand upon my arm, while the Admiral looked up from his papers sharply.

"You know——" he began.

"Yes, monsieur. The wife and daughter of the Vicomte de la Notte." [249]

"I thought him at Villeneuve," said the King.

"Sire, he was with Ribault," I said, my heart bursting.

Coligny still paused.

"For the love of God, sir, read on," I exclaimed, forgetting the Presence and everything save that we were there, speaking of the woman I loved—and that she might still be alive.

The King smiled a little.

"You are impatient, monsieur," he said, not unkindly.

"—Madame and Mademoiselle de la Notte," continued the Admiral, "who had been upon their guard and had fled to the woods through a lower casement at the first sound of danger. The rain was coming down in torrents, but these women hid themselves in the hollow of an oak tree. Madame de la Notte could go no further, for she was terrified and sick unto death. I threw some bark and brush-wood before the opening to the tree, but heard the sounds of the Spaniards coming and so fled away toward the sea in company with the crossbow-maker, who was weeping and wringing his hands——"

"The coward!" said De Brésac.

"I presently descried others, and came upon the artist Le Moyne and a Flemish soldier carrying a woman who had been wounded in the breast. Then after toiling through a deep swamp we met Captain René de Laudonnière, with whom we struggled through the marshes in great distress to the vessel of Captain Mallard." [250]

The Admiral paused, scanning the document. "Um—ah. The remainder deals with the voyage to Swansea in Wales, and is of no importance."

"By my faith! Nor is any of it, save as information. 'Twas a most scurvy trick to lock those gentlewomen up to die in an oak tree. Your carpenter could better have learnt gallantry from the hardy Flemish soldier whom he is at pains to describe."

"And yet 'tis just such a place that these devils might overlook," replied Coligny. "René de Laudonnière, who has sent me his report——"

"Ah, mon père," said the King, rising abruptly. "Shall you not spare us further reports this morning? It will all be looked to in good time. You shall prepare a plan and I will follow it. Will that please you?" And then gaily, "As for me, this morning, mon brave,—ah! I have so inventive a humor that not less than three inspirations have come to me while I have listened. My dear Ronsard will be here within the minute and I have a sonnet which I must write to him." And then turning to us, "Messieurs, you may be sure that nothing will be left undone to secure the punishment of this Menendez de Avilés for the insult which he has offered me and the people of France." [251]

And so we bowed ourselves out, I a prey to violent emotion, De Brésac not knowing whether the King were insincere or only a fool—M. de Teligny sure that he was both.

CHAPTER XIX.

I MEET THE AVENGER.

My wound was open again. I had learned that the carpenter Challeux had seen Mademoiselle alive after the massacre at Fort Caroline, and the tide of ebbing hope, ever restless as the moving sea, flooded up again upon my heart and engulfed me with tender memories. There was a chance—the merest thread of doubt—which held and led me willing captive amid the maze of uncertainties which seemed to compass me about. Even as Challeux had told, the story of Emola's brave might still be true. They had perhaps captured her and she had died on the way to San Augustin! But the ring might have been lost! She who was killed might have been another! My lady may have remained hidden secure in the great tree trunk where Challeux had concealed her! She had followed my advice to be on her guard; why might she not have waited and fled by night to Satouriona? His camp at that time, as she knew, was to the north, nearer the Fort than that of Emola, where we had been. If she had reached it, she would be safe as though in England. For had not the great Satouriona, marveling at her beauty, given her a necklace of beads, saying that she was fair as the moon and calling her the "Moon-Princess"? These strange people would take her into their village and serve her as they would one of their own blood, high in the councils of their nation.

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Ah! 'Twas sweet and holy thinking for me. But alive or dead, my wish to cease this idle play at service to the King and be up and doing something to find her, or to avenge her death, came upon me again strong as upon the sand-spit when my heart beat high with hope. I must go back in search of Mademoiselle. I could not wait with this fever of hope burning into my heart. I wished now that I had never left the country—that I had thrown in my lot with the Indians and thus lost no opportunity to hang upon the trail of the Spaniards and so have learned the truth beyond any doubt. De Brésac would say nothing. He merely shook his head, or, sighing deeply, shrugged his shoulders. M. de Teligny advised that I give up all hope of ever seeing Mademoiselle again. So I had no encouragement, save only that hope which came like an instinct from my own breast.

The days dragged slowly by. Another messenger had been sent to Forquevaulx and another answer had arrived from the Court of Spain. The whole affair was now the property of the people, and in every inn could be heard expressions of horror and consternation from Catholic and Protestant alike. Charles had written Forquevaulx in this fashion:

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"It is my will that you renew your complaint, that reparation be made for the wrong done me and the cruelties committed on my subjects, to which I cannot submit without too great a loss of reputation. The Seigneur de Forquevaulx will not fail to insist, be the answer what it may, in order that the King of Spain shall understand that His Majesty of France has no less spirit than his predecessors to repel an insult."

Brave words enough. Words indeed! Words were made to hide the thoughts of courtiers!

Forquevaulx fulfilled his commission. Philip's only reply was to refer him to the Duke of Alava.

"I have no hope," wrote Forquevaulx after this, "that the Duke d'Alava will give any satisfaction as to the massacre, for it was he who advised it from the first."

That was the news we heard, and that was like to be the end of the matter. The King of France had been three times insulted and now refused to raise further voice in reply. Charles and the Queen-mother would not quarrel with Spain, and all France rang with the indignity. They had resigned themselves to the affront. We saw the King almost daily going to the hunt, a faint color stealing into his sallow cheeks as he cantered down the crooked streets with his brave following. Smiles wreathed the lips where sternness should have been; and eyes that should have wept his own heart's blood danced and sparkled with the joy and passion of the chase. It was a grievous thing to see a man of his good presence falling deeper and deeper under the blight of his weakness. For all Charles cared, outraged humanity might forever cry aloud, the blood of hundreds of murdered Frenchmen might stain his very hearthstone, and the proud standards of France be lowered and trampled in the dust by the soldiers or assassins of any nation of the earth. Was he not the King? Was the stag-hunting not good? And had he not written a sonnet to the eyes of Marie Touchet and an ode to "Justice," both of which M. Ronsard had pronounced incomparable?

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But there were still gallant men in France. Our petitions and those of the relatives of the martyrs were not to be made in vain. Upon the morning of a certain day, while we were yet within doors, came a gentleman asking for M. de Brésac. He was a soldier of ancient birth and high renown, named Dominique de Gourgues of Mont-de-Marsan. De Brésac had served with him, and had told me something of his vigorous fiery nature and life; how as a boy he had been taken by the Spaniards near Sienna; how with brutal insult they had chained him to the oar as a galley-slave; how the Turks had captured this vessel and carried her to Constantinople; how they had put to sea again and were captured by a galley of the Knights of Malta who had set the prisoners free. De Gourgues had served in all parts of the world and his reputation as a naval commander in France was high—second only to that of the martyred Ribault. He hated the Spaniards with a mortal hatred and the tidings which we had brought from Florida had set his hot Gascon blood a boiling.

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But I was ill-prepared for the figure he presented. I had pictured him a great swarthy man built somewhat upon the scale of Diego de Baçan, with a deep roaring voice and the manner of a bravo. The person I saw was none of this; for he was not large in stature, having a figure tight-knit even to slenderness. Yet it was plain to see he was built upon the model of a hound, and that the muscles upon him were as steel springs fastened upon a frame of iron. His head was ugly beyond expression, somewhat in the shape of a pear, with a wide bulging forehead, the flesh falling away at the temples and cheeks almost to emaciation. I looked in vain to his mouth and chin for the force I could not find in his brows; and then back to his eyes, where my gaze at last rested enthralled. All else might have been as nothing and those mysterious eyes would have revealed how deep lay the soul of the man. I saw them not often in repose upon this morning, for they were flashing forth the fire that was raging in his heart; but when he paused a moment they opened wide under the broad brows,—melancholy, penetrating, but frank, sincere and true; eyes to watch, to grieve, to weep even, but not to deceive those he held in esteem. His voice was not strident or harsh, even as he spoke loudly, but soft as that of a woman. But in it there was that note of command which no man who has served with a great officer can ever forget.

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He bounded up the stone stairs, two steps at a time, and came into the chamber with an unmistakable vigor and firmness, as one accustomed and sure of his welcome.

"Ah, seigneur," he cried, espying De Brésac. "Welcome to France!" And rushing to the Chevalier he embraced him as a brother.

"Mon ami, you are new-come from Mont-de-Marsan?"

"This very hour, mon brave, and I have ridden directly to you."

Whereupon the Chevalier presented me to him, explaining that I was the Killigrew who had been at San Augustin.

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"Good!" he said abruptly. "Monsieur, I am indeed fortunate. It is upon this very business that I am come to you." With an abrupt gesture he threw his cloak aside and seated himself. Then without ado, he began to speak.

"The King of France is a sluggard and a coward," he said fiercely. "He has bowed the head of every honorable man in France upon the breast in shame. I, who have been upon the soil of many countries, have ever held my head aloft in pride; for I am a Frenchman. That heritage holds enough honor to place me among the ranks of the chosen of the earth. Our nation is a brave nation and in our land a man of honor dies rather than suffer a stain to fall upon his name. The glory of our deeds has resounded from one end of the world to the other, and the lustre of our achievements has been like the gleam of a shining blade in the fore of battle."

He paused and then continued slowly, "M. le Chevalier, that pride is gone; that heritage of a good name,—an empty sound; that lustrous escutcheon,—beaten to the earth, and dimmed and blotted by the blood of our own kindred which has flowed upon it."

"God knows it is so," said De Brésac.

"You of England," he continued, appealing to me, "know well that no insult such as this could rest against the fair fame of your Queen, monsieur," and he rose from his seat. "Unless something is done we are a people dishonored upon the face of the earth."

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"The King has promised the degradation of this Menendez," said the Chevalier.

"His promises, like his verses, come ready made," sneered De Gourgues. "Pah! he is without candor, this King;—without strength, without honor,—without anything that men hold most high." M. de Gourgues was walking furiously up and down as one possessed.

"Sh——" said De Brésac.

"I care not," said the wild Gascon. "'Tis better far to die, or to have no country. Spain insults the King and the King is dumb. The nobles about him are Italians in the Spanish interest. God save poor France from her rulers now and ever, say I."

Then he sat down and unburthened himself of the object for which he had come to Paris.

"I am come," he continued less wildly, "to ask you to help me avenge this wrong—to raise again the Standard of France from where it has been trailing in the mud by Spanish feet."

So rapid and fiery had been his speech that I could not get the exact purport of his words. How he, a simple country gentleman, could hope to embark upon so large a venture without King's aid or commission was more than I could readily comprehend. Nor was De Brésac in any better understanding. "But, monsieur," he began, "if there were any——"

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"Ah, Brésac," he cut in, "you do not trust me. You think I will not do as I say. As you will—I tell you, I will destroy this Fort San Mateo if it takes every crown and acre in Mont-de-Marsan!"

"Forgive me, Chevalier, I am but a slow thinker. I am with you if you will but give me half an earful of your plans."

"You will go?"

"With all my heart."

"And you?"—to me.

"If not with you, then with some other," I replied.

"Ah! Then that is done," he exclaimed joyfully. "Now to the plans. I believe in my company first

and my plans next. For plans are of no use if there is no one to put them to practise. Here is what I shall do. If during the week to come the King of France does not obtain reparation from Spain and the degradation of this monster, Menendez, I will provide ships and men, and myself sail for Florida."

"But how?" we both asked in the same breath.

"My inheritance is for sale," said this wonderful man with a cunning smile, as though he were bartering a horse. "I shall obtain money from my brother and any others who may still find a virtue in honor. I shall have three small vessels with a hundred arquebusiers and eighty sailors. Blaise de Montluc, lieutenant for the King in Guienne, where my brother has a high post, will give me a commission to make war upon the negroes of Benin—to bring them out as slaves, an adventure now held most honorable—and then—then, voyez-vous, we will go not to Benin, but elsewhere—where, we cannot at this time precisely tell and so cannot inform our valiant company—but to some place where there is easy service and much profit. Is not the plan a good one?"

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De Brésac had listened, his eye kindling with enthusiasm. He now cried out, "It is more than good, it is wonderful! And upon my life, it succeeds! You shall have—not two hundred men, but two thousand—for by now there is not one Indian friendly to the Spanish among all the tribes of Satouriona. They will not live in subjection. I have lived among them and I know."

"Think you so? Then pardieu, 'tis simple as plain sailing, and not one stone of this fort will we leave upon another. There's my hand on it. And now adieu and for the present—silence!" So saying he threw his cloak about him and went away as quickly as he had come.

So rapidly had the whole business been accomplished, that when he had disappeared I began wondering whether it were all true, or whether this strange person were but a whirlwind creature of the fancy. But there was De Brésac holding his hand and looking at his fingers, which De Gourgues had clasped.

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"Ugh! Shall I ever straighten them?" he cried. "He has the grasp of the Scavenger's Daughter. [C] This comes of being chained to a galley-oar. No, 'tis no dream. He will do what he promises, never fear. 'Tis the most wonderful man this side of hell, Killigrew!"

[C] An instrument of torture.

I laughed at his manner of expressing it. Yet I did not doubt that it was so. For after De Gourgues had gone, I could not cast from me the spell of those melancholy eyes, and so great was his charm and vigor that it seemed as if the spirit of vengeance had been born again and had taken a new life in us all. Here was a man to dare a chimera—to achieve the impossible. Brésac and I embraced each other and went flying to M. de Teligny to tell him of the good fortune.

As I think of it now it seemed as though we were going upon a journey for sport or play at beast hunting instead of a deadly mission of death and destruction upon men like ourselves. But like the Avenger, there was no restraining us. At last we had a champion—at last there was a plan—something definite and certain in our minds, however foolhardy, to lift us from this quiet and inaction, this slough of despond, which, after our travail and excitement, lay upon us and weighed us down like a sickness.

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M. de Teligny listened in surprise to the plan of De Gourgues, his eyes sparkling with joy at the news, for all the world like those of some old war-horse champing at the bit and impatient for the scent of battle. It was a great venture, he vowed, and much honor would come of it. It was one of those expeditions most to his liking, for were we not outnumbered three to one? And would not all men rejoice that we had wiped away a stain from the fair name of France? He sighed deeply that he was worn in years and service. But he would have gone had we not shown him how much more we would have need for men with all the vigor of youth, to strike blows quicker and harder than had ever been struck before.

The week passed, and the King was still busy upon his hunting and ballade-making. No word came from the Court of Spain and no word was given forth at the Louvre for the people. The affront had been passed over.

De Gourgues, not wishing that M. de Teligny should be implicated in his plots, came no more to his house. Our meetings, which M. de Teligny attended, however, were held in a small house just off the Place St. Germain, where negotiations were conducted, with the utmost secrecy. I had not acquainted Goddard with our plans, for I knew from what had happened in Dieppe that on any matter of deep interest his tongue would wag in spite of himself. I told him only that we were soon to depart upon another mission to the New World. At which he knew not whether to manifest most joy or sorrow; for he was torn between a desire to remain at the side of the damsel he had gained and the wish for another packet of tobacco, as his own through much squandering had been greatly reduced in size. Day after day we saw our numbers slowly increase until soon ten gallants, young and hardy like ourselves, the rank and chivalry of France, were vowed to our purpose. The Chevalier de Gourgues meanwhile had entered upon negotiations for the sale of his estates and had written to his brother in Guienne, from whom after a time there came a reply most encouraging, enclosing the commission from Blaise de Montluc and an offer of money for the enterprise. Fortune so far seemed to smile upon our efforts, for nothing had occurred to mar our plans and all things needful were readily procurable. Word came from Bordeaux, where an agent of the Chevalier had been secretly at work, that several vessels lay at that harbor which might be made to serve us admirably.

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Twice M. de Teligny went to Admiral Coligny to learn if despatches had passed between Paris and Madrid and what was the disposition of the King. Each time he came back with fury at his

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heart, saying that the King had no humor for religious discussions. But even had Charles shown a disposition to take up his own quarrel, nothing would have deterred the Chevalier de Gourgues from carrying out his plans, upon which he had entered with a nervous energy that knew no abating. By the end of a month or so, all the necessary money having been secured, De Gourgues and I set out for Bourdeaux to look into the worthiness of the vessels upon which the agent had reported. We found all three to be of small size. One was somewhat larger than the others, being built upon the plan of the vessels of the Levant, propelled, if need be, by both wind and oars. The two smaller ones were staunch enough and could they hold all of our company, I did not doubt that we might reach the Terra Florida in safety. They, too, had banks of oars and this I considered to be a matter of great value; for, the draught being not too deep, all of the craft could be brought over the bar and into the River of May if necessary. Arrangements were made with a victualer that supplies to last a year were to be set aboard; and arquebuses, morions, pikes, and arbalests were to be procured. The agent was instructed upon the class of men we needed and notices were set up in the shipping towns for men of youth, skilled in the use of pike and arquebus, who wished a venture of a year which would be attended with honor and profit. During the second month of our preparations the word had gone abroad that we were gold-seeking and many hundreds of adventurers came beseeching De Gourgues to take them. From these he picked out those he wished, with the same skill and quick judgment that he used in buying his hemp and oakum. He had that nice eye for hardiness that Pompée had for a piece of steel or Montmorency for a saucy bit of horseflesh. Toward the end of April, De Brésac with Goddard, and the cavaliers, rode down from Paris, and with great rejoicing we all straightway entered aboard the ships which lay, full victualed and supplied, at anchor in the Rade.

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CHAPTER XX.

WE SET FORTH AGAIN.

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The last figure we saw as the barges pulled away from the pier was that of M. de Teligny outlined against the sky, erect and soldierly, his feathered beaver hat raised above his head in salute. We gave him a round and hearty cheer, for we knew how deep his heart was grieving for the youth that was his no more.

By great good fortune I found myself with De Brésac upon the larger vessel, which De Gourgues had renamed the *Vengeance*. The two smaller vessels were under the command of Lieutenant Cazenove an officer of experience and devotion. With us was François Bourdelais, a brother of the captain of the *Trinity*, and four other gallants. Of arquebusiers there were fifty, and of seamen there were a dozen or more, including Goddard and a trumpeter named Dariol, who had been with René de Laudonnière and knew the Indian language better even than De Brésac. These arquebusiers were a rough-looking lot—different in character from most of those who had gone with Ribault—and De Gourgues, who knew his Frenchmen, said with joy that he had never seen so hard-hitting a company. I smiled a little as I looked at them and he knew my thought, as he seemed, through some operation of will, to know everything.

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“Ah! M. Killigrew, you think them better let loose upon the Spanish than upon us.” He laughed. “True it is, mon ami, but they need only a little prodding into shape. Take my word for it, these are the only men for a venture such as this. Make them forget the debt the world owes them, give them a free swordarm and a Saint to swear by and they will charge through an army of Dons and back again for a faith which may set as lightly upon their consciences as the skin upon their elbows.”

Our voyage was not to be so favorable as our preparations. De Gourgues gave a rendezvous at the River Lor, in Barbary, and we set sail upon a brisk breeze. Before night, this wind blew up into a storm which drove us into Rojan. Twice did we venture forth, and each time were driven back, being at last forced into the Rade at Rochelle, where we came to anchor in the Charente and remained eight days. This was a source of deep chagrin to De Gourgues for our provisions were being consumed, while we were coming no nearer to our destination.

For a few hours the storm abated, and with some misgivings at the looks of the weather we put to sea again and set our prows to the southward. But hardly had we dropped the land into the ragged sea behind us than it began to blow still more fiercely than before. 'Twas more like a summer storm in the tropics, and hardly to be understood so early in the year, for the summer was yet a month away. Nor was it a favorable augury for our voyage. We did not know our men; and sea-people are of a wont to put strange interpretations upon the movements of the elements, so I feared that they would take this misfortune as an evil presage of what was to come. For two weeks off Cape Finisterre we were tossed hither and thither at the mercy of the winds, the waves running sprit-high, dashing in at the ports, which had come loose, and flooding the lower deck. It was in no manner so severe as the storm which had driven the fleet of Ribault upon the beach, but this *Vengeance* to which we had trusted our fortunes was not the *Trinity* or the *Gloire*, and the buffets which met us were short and severe enough to play great havoc with the mind of a landsman. At last, all sight of the vessels of Lieutenant Cazenove being lost, and having had many small misfortunes—such as the staving of one of our quarter-boats and the loss of a piece of the bowsprit—the thing I had been expecting came to pass. The arquebusiers mutinied.

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The trouble came on an afternoon, the third week from the Charente. The men had gathered

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forward in a seething group, with looks more lowering than the clouds; and there was an ominous muttering and a clatter of steel under the fore-castle, where some of the arms were kept. Many of the rogues were still sea-sick, and this made their tempers even worse than they were wont to be. These sounds and sights were most obtrusive where we stood upon the poop, but De Gourgues had the appearance of one most oblivious. He searched the sea line with his glass for the lost sails, glancing ever and anon to the westward, where the weather was showing signs of promise; but no look would he give to the waist or forward deck, where the men were scowling and gesticulating among themselves. Not until the sounds became too unruly to be mistaken did he notice. Then laying his glass upon the binnacle, he passed to De Brésac and bade him have two of the inboard patereros loosed and trained upon the decks below. The Chevalier and Bourdelais sprang to the guns and in a moment had cast off the sea-breaching. The rogues saw the movement, and, led by a tall bearded scoundrel named Cabouche, came aft in a most formidable array.

They had not passed the main-mast before De Gourgues with a spring was down the ladder with drawn sword, and single-handed stood face to face with their leader.

"Back!" he said in a voice of thunder. "Back to your kennels, you dogs!"

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I had never seen him thus. So entirely was he transformed that he seemed a very demon of rage. He was leaning forward as though crouching for a spring. His voice was like the yelp of an arquebus in the beginning of a battle. We could not see his face, but it was plain it must have shown something the rogues had not thought to see in one ordinarily so melancholy and calm. They stopped as of one accord, and looked from one to the other as though some mistake had been made, each ready to accuse his neighbor.

For Cabouche, the posture was more awkward. He stood alone in the face of the enemy, plain to the eye of every man upon the ship. He did not see his comrades behind him; he only knew that did he not make good his defiance, his position as bravo upon that ship was gone for all. He lowered his pike and came forward upon De Gourgues with the rush of an angry bull. It was a terrible lunge that he made. Armed only with a rapier as the commander was, the blow would have done for any other most surely. But De Gourgues stood firm, looking at the fellow, the point of his rapier upon the deck. He waited until the pike seemed almost to be touching his doublet, when like the wind he sprang aside. Then with a deft turn of his foot he tripped the lout and sent him sprawling, so that he went into the lee-scutters and rolled with the wash of the deck, cursing.

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The mutineers, covered by our guns, remained as de Gourgues had halted them, and stood as though spellbound at the turn of the affairs of Cabouche. One discharge and a sudden rush of our seamen and cavaliers would have driven them below like sheep. But there was need of none of this. De Gourgues, holding up his hand to restrain us, stood swinging with the slant of the deck, watching Cabouche, who was rising from the scutters, dripping with salt water and swearing aloud that he was not yet done. The man drew his dagger and came forward, moving in a circle around De Gourgues, looking most dangerous. The Chevalier stood this play for only a minute, when, lurching forward like a flash, he spitted Cabouche neatly through the hollow of one of his great ears, and bore him back against the fife-rail.

The rascal dropped his dagger, gave a roar of pain, and sought to disengage himself. But his ear was tough, and the Captain only pushed him the harder, holding him spitted at arm's length, talking to him and examining him the while as though he were an underdone fowl over a broiling-iron.

"Thou art satisfied, Cabouche?" he inquired in a crisp, sharp voice. "Thou art satisfied? Wilt remain upon this vessel? Or wilt thou go ashore? Thou wilt remain in the fore-castle,—is it not so? Thou wilt tell them,—thy mutineers,—that rapier points and pike-points fly on end and bristle for such as thee?" And here he cast him off against the main-mast in contempt. "Bah! Cabouche,—thou art but a poor pikeman. For there is much more to learn in the management of the feet than of the hands; and these things I will teach thee one day. For the present, go below and wash the blood from thy face. And if the lesson is not enough, I'll have an ear-ring for thee to match the hole I have made. And 'twill be none so fashionable as those you wear, I'll warrant."

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The fellow slunk away from his look like a dog. As for the other arquebusiers, most of them had put their pieces back in the racks, and had gone about their business.

I marveled at the skill of De Gourgues in catching his man so nicely. But he only said, "'Twas most simple; the rascal has the ears of a donkey—and the stubbornness—*ma foi!* But 'tis too brawny a fellow to feed to the fish, and his hearing of my commands will be all the better for a little blood-letting in the ear."

Afterwards, when I saw Mongol coins, thrown about into the air, picked upon the point of his rapier, through the square holes in them, I marveled no more at the ease with which De Gourgues had spitted this Cabouche. It was the influence of his look which I was at pains to understand. For though I had seen and quelled mutinies such as this three or four times in my life, I am at loss to describe the power which lay behind the boldness,—power felt by every man upon the ship. It was the very witchery of fearlessness. Cabouche troubled us no more; and in the end made a most excellent soldier, hanging upon the looks and orders of the Captain, and truckling as he had never before done, either upon sea or land.

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To our great joy, when we came to the rendezvous we found our consorts awaiting us, they having had little misfortune of any kind, and all being well. We went ashore and rested; there, with water, game, and fresh fruits, the men of the *Vengeance* were refreshed and comforted until

we set to sea again. At Cape Blanco, where we anchored for the last time upon the Afric coast, we were attacked by three negro chiefs whom the Portuguese, jealous of our vicinage to their fort, set upon us, hoping to encompass our destruction. The black chiefs came in long canoes with their men, but so warm was their reception that, though they rushed upon us twice, but one man reached the deck. This one fought so gallantly that De Gourgues would not have him killed. So we took him a slave to make good our commission from Blaise de Montluc. When the chiefs found they could do nothing with us, they went back to the Portuguese, leaving us the freedom of the port.

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Here again we filled our water casks, and then set out across the great ocean. We drilled each day, and so sweet was the weather that at no time were the decks uncomfortable. Had De Gourgues the ordering of the winds, they could not have pleased him better, for 'twas a voyage of little event; and in four weeks we came to the island called St. Germain de Porterique, where we landed and rested again. We sighted, and landed on La Manne and Saint Dominique. In the first place, we met the King of the island, who took us to his gardens, where lemons, oranges, melons and plantains grew in great abundance. He led us to his fountain, which he called "Paradise," and which he said would cure the plague and the fever. The Chevalier gave him a bale of cloth, and the chiefs loaded us down with fruit. At Saint Dominique many of the people had been killed by the Spaniards, and many had starved themselves to death rather than be ruled by these people. They made a perpetual war against the Spanish settlements.

"These men with long garments," they said, "came among us to teach us of their God and to make us worship him. And they tell us that we must hate the Devil. Their soldiers kill our children and steal our wives, and they are cowards. For us, if this is what their God teaches them, then we believe that the Devil is the best. We adore him. He makes men brave."

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We sailed on thus from island to island, taking water and fresh provisions where we could, capturing many sea-turtles so big that the flesh of one of them would serve for sixty people at a meal, the shells being of such a great size that large men could lie in them, and so hard of surface that an arquebus ball would not go through. When we reached Cape San Antonio, which is at the end of the Island of Juanna, we found a body of Spaniards drawn up on to the beach to dispute our landing. These we defeated after a brisk battle and procured the water of which we were in need.

But during all this time no word had passed the lips of De Gourgues as to the object of our voyage. No slaves had been captured, save the one man who had fought his way to the deck of the *Vengeance*. When the men had wished to go into the interior of the islands in search of gold, which the Caribs said was plentiful, the Chevalier restrained them, saying that the time was not yet and that their profit would all come in good season. But he could not much longer conceal his mission. Murmurs again arose among the men of all of the ships; and though they went willingly enough about their duties, it was plain that the desire to get upon shore could not much longer be restrained. For discontent upon ship-board is often less pleasant to live with than ripe mutiny. So one day when we had arrived at a point not eighty leagues from San Augustin, De Gourgues called the companies of all three vessels upon the decks of the *Vengeance*. The momentous time had come. We knew not how much sympathy or how little they would have with our cause and De Brésac could not conceal his impatience. If De Gourgues had any doubts or misgivings as to the matter, he did not show them, but stood before the soldiers and sailors upon the deck at the main mast, an expression of great calmness and seriousness upon his features.

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"Gentlemen and brothers," he began slowly, "the time has arrived that you should know why we, men of France, have come so far and braved so many dangers under the shadow of the Western sun. The God who rules the raging of the waters, who is the God of all men upon the sea, has brought us safely to this day upon a most just and righteous mission. A foul crime has been committed against our beloved France, mes braves. A year has passed and no hand has been raised to cleanse our fair Standard of the trail of blood which the Spaniards have drawn across it."

At first the men listened in silence. Then as they comprehended, they looked at one another and the name of San Augustin passed the lips of several. Muttered curses broke from them here and there. But in a moment even these few murmurs of anger were stifled and borne away by the flood of the fiery Gascon's eloquence, as he told them in his own way the story of the massacres at Fort Caroline and on the sand-spit. As he went on his voice arose in excitement until it rang out fair and true like a clarion-call in battle, and his eyes were illumined with the light of his inspiration, as he painted the worst horrors of those scenes as I have not dared to paint them here. He told his men that this alone was his purpose, and that he had chosen them from among hundreds of others because they were the men who could best defeat twice their own number. And knowing that the duty before them would be attended with great travail he knew that he should not fail in the hour of danger.

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"What disgrace," he cried at last, "if such an insult should pass unpunished! What glory will there come to us, if we avenge it! To this venture I have devoted my fortune. The vessels upon which you float are mine. The morions and the pieces on your backs are mine! Your weapons,—mine! All mine to avenge your soldier brothers! From the first I have relied upon you, even when you did not trust me. I have thought you jealous enough of your country's glory to sacrifice life itself in a cause like this! Was I deceived? Must the bodies of your soldier brothers swing like thieves from these wild fir trees, the brand of shame upon them, food for crows and vultures? Will no one cut them down? My men, I am here to show you the way,—I will be always at your head,—I will bear the brunt of danger. Will you refuse to follow me?"

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Never had I heard such an impassioned voice, and the spirits of the men, doubtful and restless at first, burst from a spark into a flame at his words, and at his last appeal their response rose in a roar that seemed to shake the firmament.

“A la mort! To the death will we follow you!”

It was a wonderful scene. No English company would have changed so quickly to the fury of enthusiasm that possessed them. They threw their caps into the sea and began heaving up the anchor. Many of them crowded around our Captain, begging that he would take them to Fort San Mateo and lead them at once. It was with great difficulty that he could get them to listen to him; but at last, quiet having been in a certain measure restored, he told them that they would sail through the Bahama Channel—which was most treacherous—at the full of the moon. It would be folly to take any risk at this time, when a mistake would bring to naught the planning of months.

“The time will come soon enough, my friends, for there is much to be done. To-night or the night after, if the weather be fair, we shall sail. In a week, with Gods help, Ribault will be avenged.”

CHAPTER XXI.

WE FORM AN ALLIANCE.

That night as we slowly crept up the Bahama Channel under the resplendent tropic moon, I told my story to De Gourgues. He heard it throughout, saying no word but sighing now and then, his melancholy eyes looking down the glimmering streak, into which we were sailing as into a glory. That this strange man had once been loved, and had passionately loved in return, I did not doubt; for despite his ugliness of visage there was that in his expression which would command the adoration of women, who often reckon deeper than by mere lineaments of feature; and softly illumined as he was by the pale and ghostly translucence of the night, I thought no more of his ugliness, but of his soul. For he was transfigured, and looked in his calmness even as he looked in all the majesty of passion, inspired and of this world a thing apart.

When I had done, he put his hand upon my shoulder, saying,

“It is not often that Englishmen love as do you, my friend. Build not your hopes too high, for you have suffered much to suffer so much again. It will not be long before we shall know—we shall know——” and he paused, sucking in his lip ominously. After that he took my hand and said,

“I have taken a great fondness for thee, mon ami; and our solemn duty performed, what can be done shall be done, upon that you may rely. We will first sail to the northward of the River of May to the Indians of Satouriona. If what the Chevalier de Brésac says be true, they will be willing allies upon this expedition.” De Brésac, hearing his name spoken, now joined us.

“We were wondering, seigneur, how great a value to set upon these Indians of yours,” De Gourgues said.

“I have ventured but an humble opinion, my Captain,” replied Brésac, “but I would stake my honor that there is no love lost between Satouriona and De Baçan.” De Baçan, the despatches had said, was the new-appointed Commander at San Mateo.

“I pray God that it may be as you say. For a palisaded fort of stone with half a thousand men is no slight obstacle even for the brave fellows of the fleet of the *Vengeance*.”

“All of us who have been at Fort Caroline know of the love which the great Paracousi bore for Jean Ribault. Dariol, the trumpeter, who was with the first expedition, has lived among them longer than I; and he has boasted that he will go among them without fear.”

“It is in my mind to sail directly to the country of this chief; his boast may not prove an idle one,” replied De Gourgues. And then to the guard, “Pass the word below to Dariol the trumpeter. We shall see.”

Presently the man came from the fore-castle and stood before us.

“You have no fear of the Indians of Florida, Dariol?” asked De Gourgues.

“None more than I have of M. Killigrew or M. de Brésac, my Captain,” replied the man with a smile.

“You have lived among them longer than M. de Brésac?”

“A year and more, my Captain.”

“They were friendly to M. de Laudonnière?”

“Until the madness for gold, when his soldiers broke faith with them.”

“And Monsieur Ribault?” asked de Gourgues.

“Satouriona thought the Admiral a great chief, M. le Chevalier. They swore an eternal friendship.”

“M. de Brésac says you speak their language, Dariol.”

“As I do my own.”

"You know their customs. How think you they will look upon our landing?"

"Monsieur," replied the trumpeter firmly, "I believe with M. de Brésac that if they think us Spaniards they will dispute our landing. If we prove ourselves Frenchmen and friends, they will receive us with gladness."

"Why so?"

"It is my belief that they hold the Spaniards in great enmity. For no arrogance will be borne by Satouriona. He is a great King, with great pride of spirit, and numbers his people by many thousands."

"But the Spanish have friends among the Indians? M. de Brésac has said so."

"Yes, my Captain. But they are the false-hearted, dirt-eaters of Outina. Against these, Satouriona wages a war more fierce even than against the Spanish."

De Gourgues stroked his mustache, saying,

"When we reach the coast, I will call for you, Dariol. For the present, that is all."

The man saluted and went below.

"Par la mort, his words ring true as steel," muttered De Gourgues. "If these Caribs are valiant, as he says, we will sweep this scum of pestilence from off the western land."

The next day at noon we sighted the coast of the Terra Florida, and at the thought of all Diane had suffered there my heart welled full of emotion. Now as we came nearer and nearer our mission's ending, the cloud fell down upon my spirit again, and the same struggle between hope and fear—of pain which is the price of joy—tossed me to and fro—held and freed me, like the embrace of some temptation. The sun was yet above the foreyard when we came in sight of the River of May, but De Gourgues, wishing to reconnoiter, stood on until sunset, when we were within less than three leagues from the coast. Suddenly we saw several puffs of smoke spurt from the beach as the Spaniards, suspecting no enemy, fired their cannon in salute. Not until then did we know of the new defenses which the enemy were putting upon the shore at either side of the river's mouth. Our three vessels, to better keep up the guise of friendship, boomed forth a salute in reply, after which we put out to sea again and soon lost the shore line in the rapidly falling dusk.

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The river that the Indians of Satouriona call Tacatacourou, after the name of their second greatest warrior, enters the ocean by two mouths at a distance of not more than fifteen leagues to the northward of the River of May. Within the bar there is a safe harbor, and it was for this haven that Dariol and the Chevalier de Brésac were directing our course. But not wishing to pass over the bar until day, De Gourgues held out to sea, not coming in sight of land again until well into the forenoon. Then, the river entrance being easily discerned, he put his helm over and entered the channel, coming safely to anchor at an early hour of the afternoon.

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Now that we had come to our journey's ending there was a great stir and excitement aboard the little vessels of the fleet. The arm chests and ammunition lockers were opened and all hands put merrily to work setting the arquebuses to rights, fixing new match cords, seeing to the barrels and rests that no disaster might befall them by reason of any negligence of their own. The grinding stones were brought out into the sunshine of the open deck and the grit of the polishing steel and the rattle of the pike heads made music brave and martial to the ear. The seaman sang about their work as the lighter yards came clattering down upon the deck, and the culverins, unharnessed from their sea-apparel, shone anew in the brightness of the summer sun. The shore upon both sides was plain to the view at a distance of half a league, and once or twice we saw the dusky figures of Indians upon the beach. Bourdelais and one or two of the gallants, unaware of the plans of De Gourgues, were for going ashore at once and giving battle; but he was in no haste,—when he was ready for all emergencies he would go, and not before.

Night fell again; and with the coming of dawn a great surprise awaited us, for in the gathering light, we saw that the beach was alive with savages. They made no sound but stood in groups as far as the pines, where they were lost in the misty shadows of the forest behind them. Here and there a figure was moving from one group to another, and we knew that their runners had gone out to the nearer villages and that they had assembled to combat our landing. De Gourgues frowned as he came upon deck.

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"Crebleu!" he scowled, "there must be three thousand of them at least. Fools that they are! I have no men to waste upon such carrion as these. You are a wise soothsayer, M. de Brésac!"

"Monsieur!" replied the Chevalier with some dignity, "I have only replied to your questions with the best of my understanding."

"But these red devils," De Gourgues continued, "are armed to the very finger-nails. They look from here little like the allies you have promised us, M. de Brésac. Ho! Dariol, come aft!"

De Gourgues was striding up and down in a ferment. He saw his anchors gone and his plans set adrift by this unexpected resistance. When Dariol came, he stopped before him savagely, and pointing to the dark mass upon the beach said with scorn:

"Look you, master trumpeter, at your friends yonder! Look, I say! Must we cut our way through all this red vermin before we may reach the Spanish Fort? Explain it,—if you can. What has happened?"

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Dariol wore a most serious face.

"The matter is bad, my Captain, for these Indians are surely bent upon war——"

"Well!"

"If we cannot prove our friendship we shall not land without a battle."

"'Tis plain as a pike-handle," said Bourdelais.

"A pretty pickle, sure enough——"

"M. de Gourgues, had you thought," interrupted De Brésac quietly, "that they may take us for Spaniards?"

"But even so——"

"Seigneur, I am willing to take a risk. If Dariol will go with me, I will go to the beach asking for Satouriona——"

A murmur arose among those within hearing. It seemed to many a most daring thing to offer; for to our people, many of whom had never passed the borders of France, these Indians were as wild beasts or Africans, fit only to be shot or captured as slaves. For me, I believed with Brésac and having been at the council table with Satouriona I foresaw little harm if he were put among the natives upon the beach. So when Dariol had said that he would go, I too offered my services.

But De Gourgues in his uncertain and dangerous mood was of a different mind. [289]

"I have no humor to lose all my men upon such a fool's venture," he said. "Dariol may go, if he have the hardihood. M. de Brésac——"

"Seigneur," interrupted the Chevalier, "this man must be rowed ashore. He cannot talk and make signs to these Indians, rowing at the same time. It is I who first offered this service."

De Gourgues frowned, debating for some little time, but at last gave orders that a boat should be lowered into the water. Every persuasion that I might, I used upon him until I saw that further argument was mere waste of words. He would not let me go.

"No," he said shortly, "we are already too small a number. Were you to go I should be sending—not three, but six, men—and that were already four too many."

With great anxiety he watched Dariol and De Brésac drop down into the boat. They had no weapons and had removed their doublets to row the better. Dariol had put in the bow a number of small trinkets, such as mirrors, knives and strings of beads, with which he hoped to show the signs of friendliness. The morions of our arquebusiers lined the bulwarks, for the company thought these two men were going most surely to their death. No word was spoken and the sound of the oars plashing in the quiet water of the harbor came down clearly upon the breeze from the land as the little craft drew nearer the shore. When half the distance had been traversed we saw Dariol lay down his oars and stand up in the bow shouting, "Antipola! Antipola!" waving a string of beads in his hand. This brought forth a chorus of cries from the beach, and the savages came down to the water's edge shouting and waving their bows. But De Brésac, at the oars, not even turned his head at the outcry. He bent steadily to his work like a London waterman, sending the boat at each stroke nearer and nearer the moving crowd. [290]

The excitement upon the ship was intense, for in a moment the craft would be grounded upon the beach in the very midst of the enemy.

"Most gallantly done," said De Gourgues, beside me, below his breath.

Dariol began shouting again, asking for Satouriona, but in the commotion we could not hear what further was said. Then something happened; for we saw a tall figure come out to his waist in the water, holding up his hands before him. In a moment the boat disappeared in the human wave that engulfed it as the Indians surrounded it upon every side, seizing the gunwales and running it up on the beach. It was a most confused mass and we could make out little of what was going on. A fellow up forward shouted, "They have killed them! They have killed them!" and a great cry arose on the *Vengeance* which drowned the yelling of the savages upon the shore. Some of the Indians were jumping into the air and throwing their bows aloft; and Bourdelais, who was looking through the glass, said haltingly, [291]

"I see them—there is the shirt of De Brésac. Three of them are holding him—no—they are,"—and then excitedly, "upon my faith—they are clasping him by the hand—they are touching Dariol upon the shoulders. It is friendship—seigneur—friendship!"

De Gourgues snatched the glass from Bourdelais' hand and fixed it quickly to his eye.

"You are right, Bourdelais. They walk up the beach, my comrade! They converse together. Ah! it is well."

It was now patent to all on board the *Vengeance* that no harm had befallen our comrades, and there was great rejoicing. For there in plain sight walked Dariol and De Brésac talking with the Indian who had walked into the water, who, by his stature, wide shoulders and dignified bearing, I made out to be none other than Satouriona himself.

After awhile we saw the boat push off from the shore and make for the ship. Dariol and De Brésac rowed; in the stern we marked the figures of Satouriona and several dusky savages. At this De Gourgues ordered the company to be drawn up upon the deck, and prepared to welcome his strange visitors over the side with all the state and formality he would have shown a King of France. It was a course which diplomacy suggested. [292]

I had not before seen Satouriona in his war dress, for at Fort Caroline he and his braves had

come smoking the pipe of peace and wearing a small headdress and only the *aziam*, or breech-clout, upon the body. As his broad shoulders rose above the bulwarks, we saw that his hair had been lifted upon his head, and two eagle's feathers painted with streaks were stuck upon it. Upon his breast was painted a picture of one of those beasts which had so frightened us in the swamp—an alligarto—which was the totem of his tribe. Streaks of red and white paint were drawn upon his face, making his features fierce and threatening. I should not have known him but for his bearing, for at Fort Caroline I had thought him a most comely savage, rugged and strong-featured, but of a great calm and dignity. Behind him walked Olotoraca, a young brave, his nephew, and Tacatacourou, the second great chief of the tribe. They bore no weapons, but walked past the ranks of the pikemen and arquebusiers, making no sign of any emotion as they went with De Gourgues below to the cabin. Here he had caused a feast of wine and preserved fruits to be set forth, of which the Indians took sparingly. After this Goddard's pipe and what remained of his tobacco was brought forth, and De Gourgues, lighting it, himself passed it to Satouriona, who solemnly puffed it and handed it to his neighbor.

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De Gourgues' luminous eyes went from one of the chiefs to the other, as he considered the words best to use in the delicate business before him. Dariol stood behind his chair ready to interpret.

"I have come to the country of the great Satouriona," he said at last, "to bring him presents and to continue that friendship which was begun by the great white chief, Ribault."

Satouriona nodded gravely. "So it has been said. I and my people are glad."

"I thank you, great chief, in the name of my country and of my great master across the water, who in love and good will has sent me," said De Gourgues, from necessity speaking of the King of France. "He has sent me to give you many gifts which will be useful in your lodges as well as in the hunting. My master knows of the kindness of the great Satouriona to his servant Ribault, and prays that this good-will and friendship will continue through the passing of many years."

Satouriona arose with great dignity and spoke. His heavy voice, made to resound under the vaulted arches of the forest, rang mellow and deep in the little cabin.

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"I have said to the great white chief Ribault that the sky shall fall upon the earth sooner than I will become an enemy to the people of your nation. Since the great stone house was taken by these dark-bearded ones there has been no happy day among the people of the nation of Satouriona. The sun hides his face behind the clouds, and the flowers and fruits have ceased to blossom and to ripen. There is a blight upon all the land, and the rivers and streams dry up like the blood which flows from our hearts. The Spanish have beaten us back with their sticks which speak a loud noise, and they have burned our cabins. They have ravished our wives and daughters, they have killed our children; and our hearts are heavy and ready to burst within us for shame and anguish."

Satouriona paused to give his speech a greater value.

"All this we have suffered because we loved the great white Paracousi, Ribault. But now the end has come. We can endure it no longer, and we shall make a deadly war against them until the tribe of Satouriona is no more or the people with the black beards are beaten back into the sea out of which they came."

Again fortune seemed to be favoring us. The display of force was meant for our enemies, not for us. We knew the joy De Gourgues must have felt; but no sign of it showed upon his face. In Europe his reply would have been called diplomacy.

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"It is a great sorrow to me, O, Paracousi! that the love which Satouriona bears my people has brought ill treatment upon his tribe. But such things shall be no longer. If his nation has been abused for the love of the French, then the French will be his avengers."

As this was interpreted by Dariol we watched the face of the Paracousi. Slowly, as the truth of what had been said dawned upon him, Satouriona arose from his seat and leaning forward upon the table, looked over at De Gourgues, a broad smile upon his face.

"What!" he exclaimed, "will you fight the Spaniards?"

"I came here," replied De Gourgues, rising, "only to reconnoitre the country and make friends with you, and then go back and bring more soldiers; but when I hear what you are suffering from them I wish to fall upon them this very day, and rescue you from their tyranny."

The effect of this speech upon these Indians was great. Their faces, usually stolid and expressionless, broke into smiles; and all their dignity and quiet was swept away by the joyful tidings. Their voices rang through the narrow cabin as they rose to their feet and in rough gutturals and cries of their own wildly applauded the words of the Avenger. It was some moments before quiet was again restored, for so great was the joy of Satouriona that he had no better control upon his composure than Olotoraca, the youngest of his chiefs.

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When the Indians were seated again De Gourgues, raising his hand commanding silence, continued.

"It is most certain, O, Paracousi! that this expedition is no play for children; for those we must fight are sturdy men, well armed and sheltered in a fort built of many thicknesses of stone. You must summon the greatest chiefs and braves of your tribe, so that we shall make good our promises. We do not covet all the honor of this victory, and will share that as well as the spoils of the battle with you and your people."

"We will go," replied Satouriona, solemnly uplifting his hand, "we will go and die with you, if need be!"

"It is well. There should be no delay. If we fight we should fight at once; for it will not be many suns before the black-beards will know that our great white canoes have anchored near their fort. This should not be, for what we do, we must do in secrecy."

When this was rendered into his language, Satouriona drew his knife from his belt,—leaned forward, lifting his hands and elbows, crouching, the very picture of keenness and stealth. His voice was low and threatening like the murmur of the rising storm in the tops of the giant firs of the seashore. [297]

"Do not doubt," said he. "Do not doubt we hate them more than you can do."

After this there followed a long discussion upon the best method of attack upon the Fort, Satouriona asking but three days to send his runners to outlying villages that there might be no lack of warriors for the expedition. It was decided by De Gourgues to send three scouts at once to learn the strength and position of the two forts at the river's mouth as well as many details of the new armament of Fort San Mateo.

CHAPTER XXII.

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OLOTORACA.

During all this talk, my mind in a ferment, I was forced to sit with elbows glued to sides, unable to put the query for Mademoiselle which trembled upon the lips even as I listened to what was going forward.

I had kept my eyes upon Olotoraca, the nephew of the great chieftain, as he sat leaning forward with hands upon his knees listening to the words of Dariol. 'Twas a wonderfully handsome face and even the hideous streaks of crimson upon it could not disguise the regularity of the features and the expression of candor and fearlessness which animated them; and the pride of his port was that of a prince, heir to some great kingdom. As he glanced about the cabin from time to time I caught his eye and gave him a look of welcome which he returned with a smile. The sun coming in the after-port lit up the scarlet streaks upon his face and head-gear and penetrated the ferocious disguise, reducing him after all to his proper dimension—a fine, brave lad of five and twenty, who if born an Englishman would have served his queen with honor and profit. [299]

So I took a mind that this Olotoraca should be the one with whom I would speak of Mademoiselle. Not until the planning and discussion of the attack upon Fort San Mateo had become general could I get the ear of De Brésac and then I told him what was in my mind.

"Olotoraca," said Brésac, when at last we had come together, "it will not be many suns ere your crest will wear another eagle's feather. You will go upon such a warpath as was never known among the tribes of Satouriona or Tacatacourou; and when you come back to your village there will be many trophies upon your girdle and you will be a great chief among your people."

His eyes shone as he said simply, "It is so—or I shall be dead."

"You may one day be Paracousi of all your nation. After the great Satouriona is gone, it is to you that our people will look for the friendship which has been begun to-day."

"The Paracousi Satouriona and Olotoraca are one in all their thoughts. For is it not from him that Olotoraca has learned the signs of the forests and the medicine of his tribe? How shall he change what Satouriona has done? What Satouriona does is good, and shall not be altered."

"It is wisdom, Olotoraca. For the French are a great people and they love their friends with their whole hearts. At Fort Caroline Monsieur Killigrew and I have fought the Outinas and the Spaniards for Satouriona; and soon our chief with the pale face will revenge the insults and abuses which the Black-beards have put upon you." [300]

The young brave at the mention of the name of Killigrew had sent his cold glance upon me with startling abruptness as though to pierce me through. For the nonce he was a wild animal of the forest again. Then he looked calmly at De Brésac.

"Keel-ee-gru—the pale giant is called Keel-ee-gru?" He muttered the words half aloud, half to himself and then tossed his head so that the bear-claws rattled about his neck.

"You have heard my name?" I asked.

"The Captain Keel-ee-gru is a friend of the Paracousi Emola. A friend of Emola is a brother of Olotoraca," he replied easily.

A look passed between the Chevalier and me. There was that in the manner of Olotoraca which we could not understand. But De Brésac had made a quick theory of his own, and acting on it as was his wont, he put his hand upon the muscular shoulder of the young warrior, turning him about and looking him steadily in the eyes.

"We believe in the truth of the things you say, Olotoraca, and for our part we will keep our promises. But you, what have you done for us since we have been away? What will you do for us when we are gone?" The Indian did not look at De Brésac, but straight before him. [301]

"We will keep friendship as we have ever done," he said evenly, "asking no more than we can give."

"You have kept friendship with our people?" said the Chevalier craftily, and I saw his drift. "Then you have among you those who escaped from Fort Caroline!"

A great change came suddenly over the face of the young brave. He flashed the eye of a hawk first at the Chevalier and then at me. De Brésac was impassive. I was leaning forward, the query that was vexing my soul hanging upon my tongue. His face lost the boyish look and in a moment became again as it was when he mounted the entering ladder—haughty and immobile.

"There is but one of your race among us," he said, carelessly, "a youth who calls himself Debré. He is at the village of the Paracousi Satouriona and will be brought hither on the morrow."

It all happened thus as I have written it. 'Twas but a second of time that his eyelid fluttered at our sudden query as he sought to gain his composure. But in that brief moment there was that which showed us that the personal friendship which this young brave avowed was no friendship at all, but only breath upon his lips and in no manner to be believed. If something had happened to make the Indian distrust us, 'twas no good beginning for our foray. And these doubts must speedily be cleared if success was to attend our undertaking. For my part I was so sure Olotoraca was lying, that I made myself no concern over his denial. A French youth named Debré had escaped and had been cared for. Then why not others? If Satouriona was a friend of the French, then all refugees should be safe in his lodges.

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After the Indians had been set ashore again and De Gourgues had been told of the manner of Olotoraca, he stroked his chin gravely.

"You are certain of some deception? H-m! That is strange, for I have found a great frankness in the manner of the Paracousi. But it may be as you say—and we will be upon our guard against him. 'Tis most certain that these Caribs do hate the Spaniards with a mortal hatred and we must show no doubt of them until our mission is accomplished. So I say, do nothing to gain their enmity, even should you believe that friends of yours are in their keeping."

These were orders and he spoke them firmly. But all night long I strode up and down the deck under the deep vault of starlit sky, trying to hit upon some plan by which I could learn the truth. Why had Olotoraca started at the mention of my name? Emola had spoken it, he said, but my return to Florida should be no cause for alarm or even surprise to him, since in the presence of that chief we three, De Brésac, Goddard and I, had sworn to visit vengeance upon the Spaniards, and Emola knew that we would return as soon as could be. Unless our judgment was at fault there was some matter of common interest between this young Carib prince and me. For the chance perception which had enabled us to pierce the weak spot in his armor had shown that there was something in his mind against me, which in spite of his accustomed immobility he could not hide. What could it mean? The instinct of battle and the desire to measure my strength and skill against any man who looked at me askance, an instinct which has not been taken from me even at this day, rose up strong and I vowed I would have some fair good exercise from this fellow, should he not explain. Perhaps Mademoiselle—

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Ah—there was I making mysteries again! Why should I be forever bringing her forward into every uncertainty. At any rate Debré, the boy, would know. If she were among the Indians he could tell me where. Upon his speech, then, hung all my chance of earthly happiness.

Early on the morrow we went ashore and with a ruthless disregard for the orders of De Gourgues I set about trying to find Olotoraca. But since dawn he had been gone with our scouts to reconnoiter the Spanish fort. Satouriona was at the encampment, sending out his runners and receiving messages from the outlying villages. He received us gravely and took us to his lodge, lifting the deerskin at its entrance with a grace and courtliness to excite the envy of a gallant. He gave some orders, and when we were seated and De Brésac asked him who were the French people that had escaped into his hands, he looked at us from the one to the other, saying most frankly.

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"We have only one, my brother, and he is but a boy. Because of the love which we bear his people we have kept him safe, though the Spanish have offered us many gifts to return him to the Fort. We love him now for himself, and have made him one of our people. Behold, he is here!"

And turning, we saw a youth of sixteen or thereabouts standing at the entrance of the lodge. For a moment he drew back, awkward and fearful, and would have vanished had not De Brésac called to him in French.

"No. We are no Spaniards, mon cher, but those of your own race. Come then!"

So great was his joy that with a cry he threw himself upon us, clasping and patting our hands for all the world like some dumb animal at the sight of its master. Satouriona, cautioning us with a smile not to do him hurt, wrapped his blanket about him and went out of the lodge down to the beach to meet the boat of De Gourgues, which was reported to have left the *Vengeance*.

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Debré was a slender lad of comely appearance; but neither I nor Brésac remembered to have seen him at Fort Caroline. When his first transports of delight were over and we had told him that our object was to destroy the Fort and to restore fugitives such as he to their kinsmen, he looked at us in dismay, saying of his own accord,

"Alas, messieurs, I am the only one who has been spared."

That was all I wished to know. I would have arisen and gone forth from the lodge but Brésac looked at me, laying a hand upon my arm.

"Wait," said he.

Then said the Chevalier to the boy,

"You alone escaped from the Fort. Did you come direct to the Indians of Satouriona?"

"I fell in with a war party of Tacatacourou. They brought me to the chief village of Satouriona."

"You saw no other persons from the Fort?"

"Oui, monsieur. There were several men who fled through the swamps."

"But no women?"

"Non, monsieur. Stay—yes, there were two women who fled by the casement before me and whom I saw in the forest."

"Do you remember them, Pierre?"

"Oui, monsieur—they were ladies who came upon the *Trinity* with Admiral Ribault. They were noble, I think—though I do not remember the name,—La—La—"

"La Notte?"

"Yes, that is the name, monsieur. I know it now, because Mademoiselle was very beautiful, and when we landed from the *Gloire* I asked my mother how she was called."

"And you saw them no more after that?" We leaned forward breathlessly to get the boy's reply.

"Monsieur, I was wild with fear," he said, flushing red in shame. "My mother had been killed before my eyes and two Spaniards had pursued me to the breach in the wall. I fled to the forest, passing these women in my flight. I ran on and on until I dropped exhausted in the thicket."

"You have not seen them since?"

"In the head village of the Indians?" he asked wide-eyed with surprise. "No, monsieur! They could not have been in the village of Satouriona or I should have known."

He spoke with an air of conviction which drove away doubt from the mind.

But De Brésac pursued his questions undeterred.

"There is a village called Tacatacourou, is it not so?"

"Oui, monsieur."

"It is possible that other French persons could have been kept there without your knowledge?"

"Oui, monsieur," said the boy wondering—"but why should the great Paracousi, who had been so kind, keep me away from the people of my race? I cannot understand."

"You may know in time, my good Pierre. But there is a mystery which you may help us to solve—only let no word of this come to the ears of the Paracousi."

"Monsieur," said Pierre firmly, "Satouriona is my father and if any harm—"

"Ah, my child, you do not comprehend," smiled De Brésac. "We are friends of Satouriona and with him we will fight the Spaniards. You must take our word that we mean him no harm."

"I will, messieurs," replied the boy at last, sighing.

"It is well, mon ami. You will have no cause for regret," said De Brésac. "You have been to the village of Tacatacourou?" he continued.

"No, monsieur. It is a day's journey from the village of Satouriona."

"Did you not wish to go?"

"Oui, monsieur, but there was no opportunity. The Paracousi Olotoraca feared I should be captured by the Spaniards."

"Olotoraca!"

"Oui, monsieur. The Paracousi Olotoraca has been a good friend and brother to me."

"Ah! I understand. He thought that you might be captured again. But why should you fear capture on such a journey? Is not the village of Tacatacourou to the northward of this place,—away from the fort of the Spaniards?"

"I do not fear, monsieur," replied Debré with dignity; "but if the Paracousi Olotoraca did not wish me with him, it was not possible for me to go."

"Then he did not desire you to go? That is what I wished to learn," said De Brésac with a smile. Then after a pause, "Why did Olotoraca go to the village of Tacatacourou? Is he not the nephew of Satouriona? Is not his place by the side of his uncle the great Paracousi?"

"Monsieur, the Paracousi Olotoraca is a great brave and the first young chief in all the country. He looks about him that he may choose a squaw from the most beautiful maidens of the nation. Therefore he goes to Tacatacourou. This is the common report."

"Then he loves? The women there are beautiful, Pierre?"

"So it is said, monsieur; though having seen none of them, I cannot say. Perhaps that is why he did not wish me to go; or perhaps that is not the reason,—I cannot say. That is all I know, and I pray that no harm may come of the words I have spoken."

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"Never fear, good Pierre. You have done well. Now if it pleases we will go forth to meet the Chevalier de Gourgues. You will tell him what you have told us, and as much more concerning the armament and condition of Fort Mateo as you have been able to learn from the Indians. Will you go too, Killigrew, or will you await us here?"

"I will stay," said I with a sigh, dropping on a pile of skins.

The Chevalier looked at me sharply.

"Pouf! Have you no instincts—no perceptions? You grow weary at a most purposeful time!"

But I did not reply. Of a truth, I was weary. So many times had I sailed these flights of fancy to have my poor sails torn to shreds and my poor hulk racked bone from bone, that I was for choosing at the last some harbor of refuge where I could find a rest after it all. I had come with my harebrained followers over a thousand leagues of sea,—and for what? For murder?—for destruction?—for a vengeance by fire and sword, as the others had? No. It was not that which had drawn me to these God-forsaken shores—drawn me more surely than ever plummet sought an anchorage. It was the memory of a pair of honest eyes with tear-drops trembling on the lashes, as my lady bade me go and fight her battle for her—a battle which by God's grace had been deferred until now. True, I wanted the life of De Baçan—that was my own private affair. But what cared I for their wars about religion? There was sin enough in any worship which was not done in the way of peace and good-will and I knew that we as well as the Spaniards would all be most justly condemned for using God's altar to wipe our sword-blades on. With the discovery that Mademoiselle was not in the village of Satouriona my mind seemed to be weakening, and I had not control over my thoughts. The Chevalier de Brésac with his fine philosophy had solved the matter to his satisfaction, seeing in the actions of Olotoraca at mention of my name a sure sign that for reasons of his own, he held Mademoiselle de la Notte a prisoner. I could not—nay, would not,—bring myself to believe she was at the village of Tacatacourou. A truce to imagining! I had gone too far, and suffered too much, to be inventing new theories to drive me mad. We had voyaged from one end of the earth to the other and had come at last to the place where I had sworn we should find her. And she was not there! That was all. I had had enough. God forgive me! As I lay there in my unreason, I lost all control and cursed all things that came to my tongue, forgetting that it was only through God's providence that I had been let to live and come to this day.

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Not caring what came of me I lay there oblivious, until I presently heard a sound without. I raised my head, a figure darkened the door of the lodge. For a moment, I thought it was Pierre returning. But a moccasined foot was thrust forward, and with a deft and graceful movement the figure dropped the skin at the entrance way and stepped within the lodge. Then I saw that it was an Indian, a girl—the most beautiful of that race I had ever seen.

As I lifted on my elbow I brushed my hand across my eyes, for so quiet was she I thought truly that this dusky vision was some creature of the fancy. With a commanding gesture she approached. I would have spoken; but she placed her finger upon her lips, looking around toward the entrance in token of secrecy. I kept my peace. At last she uttered the one word, *Maheera* and, touching her breast with a long slender finger, I understood that she was telling me her name. The words, uttered in a quiet tone, seemed to come from her throat rather than from her lips and her voice was very low and sweet. When she had said that, she touched me upon my arm calling me Keel-ee-gru as though my name were some word in the soft language of her own. I marveled that she should know me and could not understand what she wished. But in a moment her object was clearer, for she began to speak in the sign language which these strange people have for conversing with one another when their tongues are unfamiliar. Of this I understood a little. She had several French words, and she moved her lithe young arms and body with wonderful grace, telling me by pointing to her dusty moccasins and simulating weariness that she had come a journey from a great distance to seek me. I nodded my head in comprehension.

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Then her face grew sad and her body seemed to melt to nothingness. She clasped her right hand upon her left and laid them both upon her heart, saying the name of Olotoraca. So gentle, soft and lingering was the word upon her tongue and so melancholy her attitude, no language could have told plainer that her heart was hers no more and that a sadness had come upon her. She sighed deeply, looking upon her hands and fingering her silver bracelets. I put my fingers upon the head in pity, for I too knew what heart wounds were.

But at my touch she shrunk away and her mood changed like an April day. The look she flashed up at me was one of pride and majesty, and there was a spark of vengeance, of wild unreason in it that taught me how concealed and subtle were the channels of her thought. She wanted no pity—none from me at any rate. In a moment she was gentle again, telling me that she had come from the village of Tacatacourou and, with a gesture which I might not mistake, that she was a princess of the blood.

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It was not till then, not until she had mentioned the name of her tribe and village, that I even so much as thought upon the object of her visit to me. Then the suspicions of the Chevalier, the association of the names of Olotoraca and Tacatacourou linked her story together in my mind in some fashion. She had come from Tacatacourou! I started up drawing in my breath quickly and looking her in the eyes. What if—if—?

She saw the note of anxious and expectant inquiry in my look and met it with a smile and sparkling eyes.

"Oui, oui," she cried in joy. "The Moon-Princess! The Moon-Princess!"

I understood. This was no mill-stone to look through. I remembered the name Satouriona had given to Mademoiselle at Fort Caroline. The darkest hour of my night was past and it was dawn that was breaking.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MOON-PRINCESS.

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Taking Maheera by the hand and lifting her to her feet, I pointed to the entrance of the lodge, where the sunlight was sifting through, and motioned her to lead on. With a friendly look she put finger upon her lips again and peered out across the clearing. She shook her head, and lifting the skins at the rear of the lodge motioned me to follow. Soon we had crept through the thicket into the forest and went rapidly down the long aisle of pines. At last the sounds of the Indian encampment were merged into the voices of the wood. A bird was singing somewhere and the sough of the wind through the tree tops overhead somehow brought back in a sudden flood of memory the nights at sea when Mademoiselle and I journeyed towards this wild western land.

It had all come so suddenly that I was bewildered, as one who has been rudely awakened from a long sleep. Truly I had been sleeping and the hideous pictures I had dreamed were false, De Brésac was right after all; it was his keenness of perception that had guessed the truth. It almost angered me to think that my intuition, steadfast through all these long months, should have failed me at the time when my heart was nearest its desire; but I was too near happiness to let any other emotion enter into my soul.

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I hurried on through the forest with Maheera; who, regardless of the heat of the morning and the roughness of the traveling, moved on beside me, seeming not even to touch the ground and giving no sign of fatigue. Her soft moccasins made almost no sound among the dried branches, while I, unskilled in wood-craft, crashed through them, awkward and heavy-footed, raising many a bird and beast which skurried away into the underbrush terrified at such noisy and unaccustomed intrusion. But for all that, it seemed to me as though my feet bore wings and once or twice I found myself going at so round a pace that my companion was sore put about to keep up with me. Then, with an exclamation at my lack of thought, I reduced my gait and we went along more reasonably side by side. Her mouth was set and she kept her glance before her upon the ground. She had traversed this distance once before, during the hours of the night, but no complaint or sound of any kind came from her throat. At about noon, when I wished to know the distance of the place to which we were traveling, she looked at the sun and pointed to the heavens, signifying that at an hour midway between noon and sunset we should reach our journey's ending. Once only did we rest. When I, feeling that the pace must be telling upon her, stopped and pointed to a fallen tree, she shook her head and would have gone on had I not taken her by the hand and led her to a seat, placing myself beside her and offering her a mouthful of *eau-de-vie* from the flask which by some good fortune I carried. We ate a few wild berries and then hurried onward. We had gone what I should have thought to be a distance of five or six leagues when there opened out in front of us a quiet valley with many fields of grain which cut into the hills with squares of green and yellow. Beyond, by the border of a river which lay like a silver snake in the meadows, was the smoke of the village of Tacatacourou.

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Maheera, wishing to conceal the object of our coming, had not chosen to go straight as the eagle flies from the encampment of Satouriona. By taking a roundabout way we had escaped the curiosity of the braves of Tacatacourou, who were hastening to the great war dance and the "black-drinking" which Satouriona had proclaimed before the attack upon the Spaniards. Maheera, halting upon the edge of the clearing, made a sign to me and we stopped. She motioned me to take my place behind her, and following a thicket we moved cautiously, encircling a plowed field in which two women were working. Presently we passed the trees upon which they had hung their babes, this being their custom, and I thought we must surely have been discovered, for the infants made sinister, wry faces when I came close to them and seemed about to cry out. But Maheera crept up, crooning in a low tone; and, saying some phrases in her soft voice, held them quiet till I had got by and was safely in the underbrush of the forest beyond. We walked silently for some time longer, threading the mazes of the forest, and at last Maheera led me, trembling at the nearness of my happiness, to an open place within a close growth of great pine trees where several lodges, neatly thatched and cared for, stood in an enclosure. Then with a smile the Indian girl beckoned me on and pointed to the entrance of the palisade.

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I walked forward upon my tip-toes and craning my neck here and there in a very agony of expectation. Maheera fell noiselessly behind me, and the crackling of every twig beneath my feet seemed to shake me like an aspen. But we must have made little noise, for we reached the gate of the palisade without notice and scarce daring to breathe, I looked around the entrance post.

Mademoiselle was there! She sat upon a wooden bench beside the door of the lodge. Her look was turned toward the west and she did not see us as we paused upon the threshold of the palisade. Her hair was cast loose about her shoulders; the breeze played wantonly with its meshes, and the slanting sun burnished it with a golden glow like an aureole. She was dressed, like Maheera, in deerskin; and so pale a gem did she seem in this rough setting that her very slenderness and fairness startled me into the dread that she was translated, and no more a creature of this earth. I feared to move and break the spell that held me. But an Indian woman

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who sat opposite, weaving, glanced up at this moment and espied us; and then my mistress turned her head.

"Mademoiselle!" I cried, coming forward, "Mademoiselle,—it is I!"

She started to her feet; but casting a fleeting glance upon me, turned half around and fell senseless upon the ground.

Maheera was on her knees beside her in a moment, and together we carried her within the lodge and laid her upon a bed of skins and hemlock-boughs. It was not until then that I saw how wasted she was. I cursed myself for the boor that I was to burst upon her so. What if, after all she had suffered, she was to fade away like a flower under my very eyes. It were better that she had been struck down among the first at Fort Caroline. What if I had killed her? The misery of that moment! I fell upon my knees, raised my voice and prayed to God, who had watched so long over her, that she might be spared. [319]

The moments passed anxiously. Maheera forced *eau-de-vie* between her lips and at last, with an intaking of breath that racked her from head to foot, she opened her eyes and looked to where I knelt beside her, my anguish all unconcealed.

"Ah yes," she sighed, "I remember now! It was silly of me. I have never done so before. But I am so weak,—so weak——"

Brave little heart! Undaunted and strong even in her weakness!

"Nay, sweetheart. It was I who startled you. Blame it to me. God knows, rather would I cut my hand from my body——"

She laid her soft fingers upon my wrist.

"Hush!" she said gently, "I know. I have learned. I know how you love me,—dear."

She paused as she gained her strength, while I mutely worshipped—then she went on reverently.

"It is that which neither time nor distance can alter. It has been with me always, and so I knew that you still lived and one day would come for me."

I had no answer but to press my lips upon her slender wrist.

She closed her eyes for a while and seemed to sleep, while I sat beside her bed in great ferment of mind at her suffering. But soon Maheera came into the lodge with a bowl of some steaming herb. This Mademoiselle drank with relish and Maheera propped her up with robes and branches. As she grew stronger the faint color came back into her cheeks. [320]

"It is over now?" she asked at last.

"Yes. It is over. There shall be no more suffering. Your friends are here and you are safe."

She leaned back her head, closing her eyes and sighing contentedly. Presently, as a thought came to her, she started up from her pillow.

"Olotoraca!" she said half in alarm. "Where is Olotoraca?"

I set my teeth as I thought of the haughty young brave and his lies to me in the cabin of the *Vengeance*.

"You are the prisoner of Olotoraca, Mademoiselle? If he has——"

"There! there! Vex me not now, Sir Firebrand." She smiled.

"But, Mademoiselle——"

"Nay, I am weary. Vex me not,—there must be no anger between you two. What! Cannot you understand? He can be no enemy to you——"

"But he lied to me! He would have concealed you and kept you from your own people."

"Yes. I am his prisoner. But you must listen to me and do what I ask of you. When you know, you will say, it is rather a debt of gratitude than of blood that you owe him." [321]

"Say on, dear heart, I will listen."

"Then it is this." She paused, fingering the robe. "Olotoraca loves me, Sydney.—Nay, do not scowl so blackly. For shame! And he but a savage creature of the woods! Can you not understand? It is a kind of worship. Though he comes often to this place, he stands aloof and waits upon me as though I were a very queen, content only to look and do my bidding; asking for nothing and hoping for nothing that I could not give."

"But he has kept you here!"

"Where else could I go, good Sydney? Here was everything this country affords. I have been safe and cherished by his people, and this old woman and the gentle Maheera; guarded, until last night when they were called to the war dance, by his own braves with never a fear of beast or Spaniard. Sydney, it was this Paracousi who saved my life from De Baçan, and it is he who has preserved me against their expeditions. Presently you shall know. Ah, you wrong him to doubt for a moment his service or his intent. Has he not saved me for you? No! no! no! There must be no more blood—no more blood! But where is he, Maheera?" she inquired anxiously. "Where is Olotoraca?" [322]

"There is no need for fear," said the girl. "Olotoraca is at San Mateo."

"Ah, I am thankful."

Mademoiselle gained strength rapidly. Happiness does not often kill. And as for me, what could I say? The mastery of my spirit was no easy task, but as I looked at her and thought of all her suffering there was nothing I would not have done for her. I resolved not to wait for Olotoraca but to take her away aboard the *Vengeance* before he returned. Afterwards, when I learned of the battles he had fought in her defense, upon my soul I began to have a liking for the man, as I had at first sight of him, in the cabin of the ship. The love we bore made this red chief and me akin.

Just before sunset, my lady, having slept a little, called Maheera to her. The Indian girl put her dark fingers upon the fair brow, tenderly stroking the hair away from the temples, and sighing.

Mademoiselle understood the easier words of the Indian tongue and their signs, and spoke a few words to Maheera asking her why she was sad. The red blood of the Indian came to her face as she answered,

"It is that the skin of Maheera is not fair like that of the Moon-Princess. Olotoraca looks no more upon the maidens of his own race."

"The Moon-Princess will soon be gone."

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"It is that also which makes Maheera sigh. For now that she has brought the White Giant to take her away, Maheera is sorry."

"It is best so, Maheera. But why did Maheera not say that she was going to bring the White Giant?"

"Maheera does not know. Only late last night came a message to Tacatacourou, saying that the White Canoes of the French had come."

"But why did she think the White Giant would be with them?"

Maheera smiled.

"Because the Moon-Princess many times had said that he would come—and—well—because she wished——" Maheera was confused. She could not acknowledge that it was jealousy. "She wished—she wished—to please the Moon-Princess."

It was my lady's turn to flush.

"Ah! Maheera," she laughed, shaking her finger. "You must not tell of these things."

The simple straightforwardness of the Indian nature would not permit her to understand, for she opened her eyes in wonder.

"Maheera thought that what she did was good."

Mademoiselle replied not, but I told Maheera by signs that her heart was a heart of gold.

Then said my lady, "Will Maheera grieve when the Moon-Princess is gone?"

"Not so much as Olotoraca will grieve."

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"But Maheera will be here and he will soon forget the Moon-Princess."

"Maheera knows not. She is sorry. She loves Olotoraca with her whole heart but she has no hatred for the Moon-Princess. She will think of her and love her always—even when she has gone into the water of the coming day."

There was trembling in the soft voice of the maid. It is a sadness to make so true a friend only to lose her again.

The following morning, with many pauses, Mademoiselle told the dreadful story of her sufferings. Nicholas Challeux had spoken the truth. For hidden in their hollow tree, covered by branches, Diane and Madame lay concealed throughout the terrific wind and rain-storm of that frightful night and through the terror of the next day. I did not press her to tell me more than she offered, for it grieved her to the soul to live over again that unhappy time. With hushed voice she told how she had fallen into the sleep of utter exhaustion and had wakened to find her hand clasped in the icy one of Madame, whose wide eyes showed that she had died of fear; she shuddered as she told of her escape upon the second night, worn almost to death by the agony through which she had passed; of her struggle, worn and draggled, more dead than alive, to the river upon whose bank she had fallen from exhaustion. Then her face lightened a little as she told how an Indian warrior had discovered her in the long grass and how he had carried her stealthily to the hiding-place among the Tacatacourous. But a Spanish soldier had seen her, and three times Diego de Baçan had come himself to the camps and villages of Satouriona telling of the death of the Sieur de la Notte and of the massacres upon the sand-spit, asking for her and offering great rewards if they would return her to the Fort, saying that she should be treated as a princess. Spanish spies were always upon the track of Olotoraca; but he, wary and skilled in woodcraft, had ever slipped away from them,—save once, when two of them traced him to the palisade. They had surprised him at a time when no guards were about the enclosure. Fearing to arouse the Tacatacourous they would not fire their arquebuses and so set upon him both at once with their swords. With his spear he had pierced one through the neck. The other, taking to flight, he lamed badly with an arrow,—so badly that the fellow could not get back to the fort to tell his discovery, but was killed that same night not a league away. Could I wonder after the tale of this service that Mademoiselle would have no blood-letting between the Paracousi and me?

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Then I in my turn, sick even at the memory of it, told how the braves of Emola had found the ring with the ancient setting and how I had given her up for lost, and then I learned how she had

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given this ring to a waiting-maid of the household of Laudonnière in recompense for her kindness and service to Madame. Thus all was explained.

That night when we had eaten, we went out into the sweet-scented woods and seated ourselves upon a bed of moss under a wide-spreading oak. The sun had set and the twilight fell down upon us warm and soft as the touch of velvet. The breeze had blown into the west, where great banks of clouds hid the last glorious rays of this wonderful day of ours. For a long time we sat silent, fearing to break upon the hush of the animate things about us. Every twig was sleeping and over us fell that deep mysterious spell of the giant forest which linked us with time. For the nonce we were instincts only, symbols of nature, apiece with eternity.

We were so happy that we knew how little was the meaning of mere words. At last Mademoiselle sighed deeply.

"It is the end of travail," she said. "The world is as tired and as content as we."

"Thou art so content?" I asked, bending over her.

She drew a little from me, smiling.

"Not too content, monsieur. Perhaps 'tis by contrast with what has gone before." She said it with a touch of coquetry, that last ingredient which goes to make a woman. For all my boorishness, I understood. [327]

"Yes, thou art happy. I can see it by thine eyes. As for me, I will be happy when I see the roses blooming in thy cheeks again."

She made an impatient gesture. "For shame upon such a loutish speech! Thou art not happy!"

"I would say——"

"You would say that the roses bloom not in my cheeks——"

"But, Mademoiselle——"

"Am I so pale, monsieur? And so uncomely? In my life I have heard nothing so ungallant! Think you I can find mirror and lady's-maid in this wild place? Monsieur—if you like me not——"

Scorning further parley, I had but one answer for this protesting.

A little soft gray squirrel, belated, had come down from a tree near by and sat upon his haunches, switching his tail and looking at us most curiously.

"Upon my word, I find you a most forward person," said my lady, brushing back her hair from her temples.

"And I, by your leave, find you most impertinent, and therefore quite strong enough to make a journey with me."

"Then we may get away to the ships on the morrow?" [328]

"And you are willing for me to carry you."

The color flushed again into her pale cheeks as she cast down her eyes upon her deer-skin leggings and then strove to pull the short skirt to cover over her knees.

"What matters it, my Diane?" I whispered. "And besides when the Fort is taken we may find a minister or priest——"

But she clapped her hand upon my mouth and would hear no more.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WE ADVANCE.

Before the sun had gilded again the tops of the loftiest pines, Mademoiselle, Maheera and I had started upon our way. I had counseled traveling in the afternoon, but in spite of her weakness Mademoiselle was impatient. She feared that by some mischance Olotoraca might return. We marched on bravely, covering two leagues before the heat of the morning, when we made a halt that Mademoiselle might rest. She vowed that she felt no weariness, but after all that had befallen her, neither Maheera nor I had the humor to see her pressed. We knew that she would have walked on until she had fallen from utter weariness before she would have spoken a word of plaint. There was no need for haste. In the depths of the woods there was little to fear. If we reached the encampment of Satouriona by sunset I would be well content, for Mademoiselle could not safely be conveyed aboard the *Vengeance* save under the cover of darkness. The attack upon Fort San Mateo could not well be made for two days, for Maheera made sure that not until the war-dance and the "black-drink" were over would her people start upon their journey to the southward. [330]

As we rested there in the deep shadows of the forest I told Mademoiselle of Dominique de Gourgues, and of the Chevalier de Brésac, and what they had done for her and for me and how much I owed the Avenger on her account and my own. When I had finished telling her of the plans of De Gourgues, she gave a sign of fear—the only one she ever showed.

"You will go!" she cried, starting up. "You will go to the attack of Fort San Mateo?"

I took her hand in mine.

"Mademoiselle," I said, in anguish that she should be so troubled, "Mademoiselle! Can you not see? My word is pledged. I must—I must go!"

Her hand clasped mine convulsively and she turned her head away.

"I had hoped—hoped that you would not! That you loved me more——"

"Do not say it, dear heart! You do not mean——"

"But it seems so hard! I have been so long alone—alone and forgotten!"

"My Diane! Do not make it even harder for me. Do not weaken now—you who have been so brave." I put my head in my hands, for I was grieving sorely. My suffering seemed to give her strength.

"No! no!" she whispered. "Forgive me. I meant it not. I am not myself. I wish you to go. It is a just fight. If God wills that you should have victory, then you will come back to me safe. If you are defeated——"

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I raised my head with a smile.

"Never fear for that, dearest. There shall be no defeat. In two days we will return—in a week will be sailing for Merry England." And then with a smile, "As for me, my Diane, why I promise you upon my word that, even if affairs go badly, I will still return to you unscathed. I shall bear a charmed life, and when I see that there is danger I shall stand in the ranks of the laggards in the attack and if there is ever a tree big enough to hide me, there will I stay until the Fort is won."

Mademoiselle was laughing through her tears by this time.

"Nay, that you will not," said she proudly. "If you go, you shall be nowhere but in the very fore of battle."

"There speaks my brave Diane! But it is impossible we should fail. With these Indians we outnumber them three to one; and by secrecy we will fall upon them as they fell upon Fort Caroline, and take them before they know that we have come."

"Yes," said Diane, "all will be well. We cannot have been separated and thus brought together to be again ruthlessly torn apart. God has been good to me. If there is to be further suffering—but I cannot believe it—I will not! And now——" starting to her feet—"En avant, Monsieur!"

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In this way by resting often we came toward sunset to within a short distance of the harbor and encampment. Then, by making a wide circuit to the left, we passed the Indian trail and by stepping-stones crossed a small stream which ran into the harbor. Down this we walked, I carrying Mademoiselle, much against her will, in my strong arms, until at the right we saw the glare of the Indian fires upon the beach and the glimmer of lights which showed where the *Vengeance* and the other ships lay at anchor. When we came to another crossing place Maheera bade us wait while she went forward toward the encampment.

By this time Olotoraca must have returned from his expedition to the Spanish Forts. I hoped that Maheera would escape his notice, but I doubted not that she could explain her presence at the camp to his satisfaction. In spite of this assurance, it seemed a long while before she came back. Several times we heard the sound of footsteps, and thinking that some keen-scented Indian might have wandered upon our trail and be following it, I drew Mademoiselle deeper into the thicket. While I feared no injury, I knew not what complications might come should the escape of Diane be discovered to Olotoraca. I had disobeyed the orders of De Gourgues in following Maheera, and I was in something of a quandary how to have Mademoiselle conveyed aboard the *Vengeance*, to safety. I knew that I had some stormy moments before me with De Gourgues, but felt that could we carry forward our object and bring Mademoiselle aboard the vessel secretly, his displeasure would speedily pass by; and I trusted much to Mademoiselle. Could he resist her, he were less than a man. After a time we heard the footsteps not of one but of two persons, and presently Maheera's soft voice called out through the darkness from the crossing place where we had been. In a moment we were together. There was De Brésac—my good Brésac,—whom our little guide had found at the camp. He embraced me with great joy, saying that De Gourgues was much perturbed over my absence, but that he himself had believed I would return safe and sound. To Mademoiselle he bowed with a grace which would have done him honor at a levee, bending over and kissing her hand and telling her in courtly phrase how long he had looked forward to this moment. I thought it savored too much of Paris for these rough woods, but nothing the Chevalier de Brésac saw fit to do was greatly out of place. Mademoiselle, for her part, told him in her sweet voice how deep was her debt, and the Chevalier—like all others who saw her—thereupon vowed himself forever to her service. I told him straightway that he might try his service now, since Mademoiselle had no humor to swim to the ship.

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"Yes, good Sydney," he replied, "and you have come near enough crossing the plans of the Avenger to set a smaller value upon your life than I have put upon the Spanish. If I mistake not, you yourself will need some further service from me. But I will see. Stay here and I will return as soon as may be." And so he departed alone.

By and by the red glare of the Indian fires increased and a murmur which at first rose no higher than the distant booming of the surf upon the beach came to our ears. There was a measured and rumbling noise which I did not understand. Maheera craned her neck and put her hands to her ears.

"It is the war-dance," she said excitedly, "the dance of the battle. Olotoraca is there. I can hear him. They are playing upon the tawægons. To-morrow they will drink the 'black-drink.' Then they will go."

In a little while the glow of the fires seemed to light the whole firmament and the sound of the voices and the drumming rose to a prolonged and savage note. Louder and wilder it grew, swelling into a vengeful and relentless scream, more animal than human, which seemed to rend the very sky. The dancers saw themselves already victorious at San Mateo—and fiercely cried their desires to their gods of war and vengeance. So piercing were the shrieks that the beasts of the forest were aroused and we could hear the answering howls come now and then from the woods behind us. Even the birds started from their perches, fluttering down past us crying shrilly to one another in fear at the unwonted turmoil.

Mademoiselle shuddered; Maheera, missing no note of the savage chorus, said proudly, "Olotoraca dances first and dances longest. Olotoraca is a great chief!"

It seemed long before De Brésac returned. But when he did, it was with the news that De Gourgues had been placated and that a boat had come ashore for us, down the beach.

"My good friend," said he, "never in my life have I seen a man so glad or so angry at the same time. He walked the cabin driving his heels fiercely into the deck. Upon my life, one would have thought it was not you but I who had disobeyed his orders. You might have set the whole tribe at enmity for all the difference there would have been in his demeanor. When I could find a pause I told him all—Mademoiselle saved and Olotoraca in ignorance; and he swore the harder, saying a man who obeyed not orders had no conscience and was better dead. In his heart I think he secretly rejoices. For no matter what the result of our venture, Mademoiselle may stay aboard with Bourdelais, and so be safe."

All of this and much more he told me as we walked behind Mademoiselle and Maheera to the boat, which we found upon a sandy beach at some distance from the Indian camp.

In half an hour we had hooked the entering ladder of the *Vengeance* and I breathed a sigh of relief when Mademoiselle was over the side and safely upon deck. De Gourgues stood by the bulwarks and bowed low over the hand of Mademoiselle, conveying her himself to his cabin which was brilliantly lighted in honor of the event. But of me he took no more notice than if I had been a lyer or a sweeper. He requested De Brésac to go with them, and I saw through the open door that food had been prepared. Then the door was shut and I was left in darkness to muse upon my indiscretions. I leaned upon the taffrail somewhat sadly, for 'twas not a brilliant homecoming for me. For a long time, it seemed, I stood with Job Goddard watching the whirling shapes at the Indian fires and listening to the savage cries of the dancers.

"'Tis time them Spaniards was a-praying, Master Sydney," said Job; "there's a smell o' blood about this here."

"Aye, Job," I replied; "I'm sick of it."

At last the cabin door flew open with a clatter and the Chevalier de Gourgues himself came out upon the deck shouting,

"Pass the word for Monsieur Killigrew."

I walked out of the darkness and stood before him in the glare.

"I have come aboard, sir," I said, doffing my cap.

"My eyes are reasonably good, monsieur," said he most sharply and coldly, looking up at me like a game-cock for some moments. "Nor have I a custom of any incertitude of mind. But Saprelotte!—I am of two dispositions about you!"

He leaned forward scowling and I was much disconcerted. "You have placed all my plans in jeopardy and I know not whether 'twere best to hang you to the main yard or to blow you to perdition with a powder charge. But"—his rigidness fell away from him and he broke into a merry laugh—"you could not wait? Eh, my beef-eater? Par la Pâque-Dieu. I blame you not—I blame you for nothing! Not if you had disobeyed the orders of the Admiral himself."

He took me by the arm and led me into the cabin, where Mademoiselle, tired but content, was smiling at us.

"The lady pleads your cause well, monsieur," said De Gourgues. "She has my service. This time I forgive you. But remember," he laughed, "if it happens that you disobey *her*"—and he paused—"if you disobey *her*, there will be no spar upon the *Vengeance* high enough to bear your bones!"

By midnight the sound of the mad revelry upon the shore had ceased, and in the silence of a night which held a deeper content for me than I had ever known, I fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

The following day was consumed in the final preparations for the attack and in the drinking of the "black-drink" by the Indians. It is a custom with them before they go into battle or danger of any kind to drink as much of this concoction, which is the brew of a kind of leaf, as they can hold. They believe that it purifies them from all sin, leaves them in a state of perfect innocence, and inspires them with an invincible prowess in war. De Gourgues, in order to show how strong were his prowess and sympathies, pretended to swallow the stuff; but he afterward told me that when he found the opportunity he had poured a quantity of it out upon the ground. It was evening before the Indians gathered their weapons and filed off into the forest, it being agreed that the

French should go by water and meet them before the attack. De Gourgues had no further need to encourage his men. The excitement was at fever heat; and aroused to the very bursting point of enthusiasm, they tumbled down into the boats with ready weapons and purpose that could know no turning. François Bourdelais, with twenty sailors, was left upon the ships. In the event of failure he was to wait as long as might be for the men to return and then set sail for France. Mademoiselle was safe at any rate. I was glad that she did not appear upon the deck. It would have savored too much of that day when I had left her upon the bastion at Fort Caroline. But among the excited Frenchmen there were many embracings and many messages to wives and mistresses. After that, they went blithely enough. For it was a wonderful venture on which we were going. We were about to attack four hundred hardy, well-trained men, in a stone fort where with reasonable skill they might hold their own against an army.

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We were well under way before the darkness swallowed up the dim shadows of the ships. Hour after hour of that calm, half-tropic night we pulled at our oars, gliding softly along by the sombre shores, sliding now and then over a pebbly bar, but moving ever slowly on to the southward, with the soothing murmur of the surf in our ears, and the balsam of the land breeze in our nostrils. In the gray of the dawn we came to another river and a breeze sprang up from the sea, which, by sunrise, blew with violence from the north-east. Here we found our Indians waiting upon the bank. For a while the gale delayed us, but our Frenchmen would not wait long, rowing at last boldly across. Had it not been for the morions with which they were forced to bale incessantly, they must surely have sunk. As it was, the boat in which I was conveyed with De Gourgues was half full of water when we arrived upon the beach.

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When we had landed and put ourselves to rights, led by the Avenger, we pushed forward on foot through the forest. By the side of the Captain marched Olotoraca armed with bow and arrows and a French pike to which he had taken a great liking. Looks of friendliness passed between us. I doubted if they had been so friendly,—at least upon his part,—had he known. The arquebusiers followed, while De Brésac and I with our armed seamen brought up the rear. All of that day until five of the afternoon, pausing only to eat and drink, we hewed our way through the swamps and thickets toward our destination. Then almost spent by hunger and fatigue we came to another river, or inlet of the sea which Dariol—interpreting for Olotoraca—said was not far from the nearest of the Spanish forts at the mouth of the river.

Job Goddard, footsore and weary, brightened at the gleam of the water.

“Odds ’ounds! Master Sydney, ’tis a mighty sweet sight. Do we take to the boats again now, sir? For my legs have little energy enough. Unless I may sit down to my work, ’tis a bad fight I’ll make this day for poor Salvation Smith, sir.”

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When we had crossed the river in the canoes which had been sent, we found three hundred Indians waiting for us. But tired as he was De Gourgues would not rest. With Olotoraca and ten arquebusiers he set out to reconnoiter, for he wished to attack at daybreak. While we rested, night closed in, and finding it vain to struggle on in the darkness among the tangled vines and fallen trees, De Gourgues was forced to return to us anxious and gloomy. After he had eaten something, a brave of the Chief Olotoraca came to him saying that he knew of a path along the margin of the sea. De Gourgues joyfully set us all in motion again.

The brief rest had made new men of us, and even Job Goddard caught some of the spirit of the adventure. The path being a good one we went forward with speed; and at dawn, after a night of indomitable perseverance upon the part of these soldiers, we reached the banks of a small stream. Beyond this and very near was the first of the smaller forts that had saluted the *Vengeance* as we sailed up the coast. But to our great chagrin we discovered that the tide was in, and having no boats at this point we could not cross. De Gourgues was in a great ferment of mind, for he had hoped to take the fort while the defenders slept. He walked nervously up and down the bank trying in vain to find a fording-place. To add to the discomforts, a drenching rain fell upon us and the arquebusiers had much ado to keep their gun-matches alight. But they held them under morions, thus preserving them and screening the glow from the sentries of the Spaniards. The light grew fast, and so we withdrew to the shelter of the thicket. The fort was now plainly to be seen and the defenses seemed slight and unfinished. We could even mark the Spaniards within, yawning and stretching their arms as they crawled lazily from their beds at the call of day. It was maddening to the Frenchmen. I could see them crouching all around me, their eyes glowing like the sparks of their match-cords, and their hands trembling with excitement.

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After a time, which seemed interminable, the tide went down; or at least it fell so low that the stream would not come higher than the arm-pits. And, finding a spot concealed by trees from the view of the fort, the passage of this stream was begun. Each man tied his powder-flask to his morion, held his arquebuse above his head with one hand and grasped his sword with the other. The channel was a bed of sharp-pointed shell-fish, and the edges of them cut the feet like knives even through our boots. The Frenchmen rushed through the water unmindful of all save the eagerness to be within the Spanish fort. But as they came out from the stream, lacerated and bleeding from the briars and the shells, the Avenger restrained them and set them in array of battle under cover of the trees, where they stood panting, their eyes kindling and their hearts throbbing in a frenzy of anticipation. Now that his quarry was in plain sight, De Gourgues laid his plans with the deliberation of a careful field-captain, sure of his position and of his men, but waiting only to devise the more surely. Whatever happened at Fort San Mateo, he was sure of these two forts at least.

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When the men were all in line and had looked carefully to their weapons, he drew his sword so fiercely that it rang against the scabbard. He pointed it through the trees.

"Look! my comrades!" he cried, "there are the robbers who have stolen this land from our King; there are the murderers who have butchered our countrymen!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DEATH OF THE WOLF.

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De Gourgues gave the word. Cazenove with thirty men pushed forward to the Fort gate while the main body of us under De Gourgues ran at full speed for the glacis. We were not discovered until we were well up the slope, when a cannoneer who had come upon the rampart sent up a startled cry.

"To arms! To arms! The French are coming! The French are coming!"

The Spaniards had just finished their morning meal and came rushing up, fastening on their steel-pieces. The gunner who had given the alarm, hastily aiming his cannon at us, fired wildly and the ball went crashing into the thicket. He had time even to load and fire again before Olotoraca, who had outstripped the others, ran up the glacis, leaped the unfinished ditch and drove his pike through the Spaniard from breast to back, pinning him to the gun-carriage. Some of the Frenchmen were by his side in a moment, and jumping down into the fort they cut their way into the thick of the superior numbers, who fell back before the fierce onslaught.

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"After me," shouted Cazenove from the gate. "They fly by this way. At their throats, mes garçons, cut them down!" De Gourgues turned the rest of his men in that direction. The Spaniards were caught between two fires and all of those who had escaped from the Fort were imprisoned between our party and that of Cazenove. The Indians too came thrusting upon their flanks. Many of them fought desperately, but their efforts were futile against the whirlwind of passion of the Frenchmen who beat them to the earth like chaff. All except a few were killed upon the spot. Those who were spared were saved by the Avenger for a more inglorious end.

During all this time we had been aware that the Spaniards in the fort upon the other shore had taken alarm and were firing upon us without ceasing. But when the first victory had been won De Gourgues turned four of the captured cannon against them; and to such good purpose that one of the Spanish guns ceased firing at once, the men running below in dismay. Then one of the boats, a very large barge which by this time had arrived along-shore, was brought to the landing-place and eighty of us were crowded into it. The river here is about a quarter of a league in width, but the Indians rushed into the water after us and holding their bows and arrows above their heads, swam across straight as water-rats. Their dark faces, fierce and scarlet-streaked, seemed to darken the whole surface of the water and inspired a great fear in the Spanish garrison. Whichever way the Spanish looked, there was certitude of a horrible death before them, and so, seized by a sudden panic, they fled terrified to the woods. But by this time we had landed below them and blocked their path with the arquebusiers, sending charge after charge into their ranks and cutting them down without mercy. They recoiled again in dismay, but the Indians had crawled dripping upon the beach and were upon them with savage shouts, beating them down before we could come within sword-thrust. It was with difficulty that De Gourgues could save the lives of a few; and indeed he had no notion of sparing them altogether. He only saved them—as he had saved the others—for another death.

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I did not know De Gourgues in the character of blood-letter. He had lost that cheeriness and buoyancy that had drawn me so closely to him. Upon his face he wore a look of satisfaction that was a horror to see. For, vengeance done, a man with any shred of compassion in him must now and then give vent to some expression to show that his devil craves a compromise with his God. But not so, De Gourgues. He looked at the blood about him without pity or compunction, and cast upon those who had been taken so sour a look that some of them drew shuddering to the length of their bonds away from him. Even I, accustomed as I had become to the horrors of carnage, turned away in disgust, for the sights I saw among the Indians were too savage for description, and the French were little better. Job Goddard was everywhere in the thickest of the fighting. And though he had little pity for the Spaniards, he, like myself, shrank from cutting down disarmed men. Once I saw a fellow whom he had spared rise upon an elbow and with his last remnant of strength send his poniard flying at my Englishman. It hit Job fairly in the upper arm and stuck there quivering. Goddard nonchalantly plucked it out and put it in his belt saying,

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"A good line shot, me friend, but most indifferent elevation. When ye wish to strike home, *aim high* me garlic eater, *aim high!* An' 'tis no cursed bad advice for a man about stepping across the threshold of eternity!"

As for me, all this slaughter turned my stomach and I sat apart, for I had come out for no such business as this; I wanted the butchery speedily over, and the attack on San Mateo made immediately. Should we be successful there, I knew that other such scenes would be witnessed, for De Gourgues had vowed there should be no shadow of difference between the massacres of Fort Caroline and Fort San Mateo. But in spite of repugnance at what would follow I hoped and prayed that we might be victorious. For I felt again the same old passion to be at the throat of De Baçan. I made my vow that he should die only through a fair test of skill or strength with me. How I might save him from those red hell-hounds, our allies, I did not know, but if I could compass it, I intended to meet him upon even terms. My practise in Pompée's *salle d'armes*

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should have made my sword-play good enough to cross blades with him. I scarce know why this haunting desire to fight De Baçan should have filled me so relentlessly through all these months; and now since Mademoiselle had not fallen into his hands, I—not he—had won the game, and the ancient grudge was fitter upon his side of the balance than upon mine.

But De Gourgues had deferred the attack upon San Mateo until his preparations could be carefully finished. All the next day we spent in making ladders to scale the walls; sending orders through Satouriona and Olotoraca to the Indians, giving them their stations in the forest and arranging that no movement should be made until a signal was given. So closely had Satouriona and Tacatacourou watched the Fort, that, though making no attack and keeping well in the shadows of the forest, they had succeeded in confining all the Spaniards within their own lines. Those gentry heard the savage cries resounding through the woods until their echoes faded away in the distance. There was desperate work before them and they knew that the sounds of the war-cries and the barking of the French arquebuses down the river meant a harder fight than they had ever had before. They judged from the sound of the shots that the French numbered several thousand. All of this we learned from a Spanish soldier who ventured out, feathered and painted like an Indian. He came within the lines of our outposts, but the lynx-eyed Olotoraca, walking with De Gourgues, spied through his disguise and the man was seized before he could get away. From him the Avenger learned that in Fort San Mateo were two hundred and sixty Spaniards under Don Diego de Baçan. This confirmed the report we had heard. De Baçan was still there. I feared at this last moment of my quest that some unhappy accident might have sent him on an errand to San Augustin.

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On the evening of the second day after the first assault, De Gourgues, well pleased and confident that his plans were carefully laid, gave orders that the Indians should close in upon the fort with all possible secrecy and lie in wait under the shadows of the trees and bushes of the hills and river bank. Before the day had broken we were in marching order and after a hearty meal went up the stream in glittering ranks, joyful but steady and assured of victory. De Gourgues made no concealment of our movements, and when we came in view of the Fort we saw the battlements shining with men in armor and knew that De Baçan was prepared to receive us. Presently, when within range of their ordnance they opened fire with their culverins from a projecting bastion. De Gourgues broke our column and scattered us through the woods, where their fire had little effect; for here the forest was very thick and overgrown and afforded a most excellent cover. We marched to the left, passing through our Indian allies, who lay like snakes among the undergrowth. We came at last to the top of a small hill, from which we had a good view of the whole extent of the defenses of Fort San Mateo. It was plain to be seen that these had been greatly improved since its capture from Laudonnière.

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De Baçan apparently had by this time lost all trace of our whereabouts. Thinking we had defiled by the river bank, in a moment he sent a strong party of Spaniards to reconnoitre. They came from their works, crossing the ditch and, all unconscious, made straight for the clump of woods in which we lay ensconced. De Gourgues, noting the advantage of his position, quickly detached Cazenove with a party to station himself at a point well hidden by trees where he could soon take them in the flank. The Spaniards, unaware that they were exposing themselves to this enfiling fire, with a strange insistence which seemed not unlike infatuation, continued sturdily to advance.

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Now it was that the discipline of the arquebusiers of De Gourgues showed to greatest advantage. He had cautioned them under pain of dire punishment not to fire before the word of command. In their ardor they strained forward eagerly, leaning upon their rests, their eyes glancing down their weapons, their fingers toying lovingly with their match cords. But not until the Spaniards had come so near that we could plainly make out their features did the Avenger give the order to fire.

Then a deadly blaze flashed in their faces, almost close enough to burn them. The shock was terrific; and before its echoes had rumbled up the river we were upon them through the smoke, slashing and piercing right and left those who stood their ground, driving those who ran, in dire confusion, back toward the Fort. But here Cazenove awaited them and poured in a scorching fire at easy range which still further cut them down. None escaped. The pikemen of Cazenove charged over them again and again like demons, and those few who were left threw down their weapons and fell upon their knees extending their arms and begging for mercy.

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The fight was speedily over, with no loss to us. When we had mounted the hill again, it was easy to see that consternation reigned in the Fort. Soldiers ran here and there upon the battlements shouting in confusion; while men, women and children, uttering piercing screams, rushed to the gate, battering upon it with their bare fists, trying to force their way out that they might escape to the forest.

The trumpet of Dariol, sounding the charge, rang out clear above the din. Never before, it seemed to me, had a battle-blast been sent up so loud and exultant. It was the signal of De Gourgues. Through thicket and scrub, down the hill for the Fort, we ran, a very human mounthsoun, shouting like madmen. Every stump and tree to the right and left of us seemed to turn by some magic into a painted savage and the air was filled with their wild screams. De Gourgues, Olotoraca and I reached the gate at the same moment, followed closely by the more speedy of the rest. By this time the women and children were running through the postern, screaming, to the forest. Their fate I like not to think of.

We were after more sturdy game. Most of the soldiers had fled even before the women, but we saw forty or fifty Spanish arquebusiers formed in the square by the corps-de-garde for a last

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resistance. I knew I should find De Baçan there. Nor was I mistaken; I saw him at the same moment that he caught sight of me, and we ran forward upon each other with the same full-hearted hatred that had ever envenomed us. The world was too small a place for both.

It seemed as though the affair were to be ended one way or the other then and there. But as luck would have it, Olotoraca, being more swift of foot, reached him first and began thrusting with his pike. De Baçan was thus put upon his guard against the Indian and had all that he could do to parry his furious onslaught. Twice his guard lay open and I might have thrust him clear through the body, but I could not bring myself to take such advantage. A nimble fellow rushed at me and all but caught me off my guard, giving me trouble for some minutes. He was a most excellent swordsman and fought with desperation. But he tired easily, and while I played upon the defensive, I watched De Baçan and Olotoraca out of the tail of my eye. By this time the sword of the Spaniard was hissing backward and forward like the tongue of a serpent along the pike of Olotoraca. The Indian had not the skill of a seasoned pikeman and only made up for his lack of knowledge of the art by his great suppleness and agility. Suddenly I saw him lunge too far. I beat the blade of my fellow down and let him go his way, while I made for De Baçan. The Spaniard seized the pike-handle just behind the head and pulled the young brave forward, thrusting at the same time, I made a leap, hoping to parry the thrust of the Spaniard, and partly succeeded, but the sword point passed through the body of the Paracousi so that he fell back upon the ground.

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Men were fighting all around us, but by some chance we were quite alone in the shadow of the Corps-de-garde.

"You might have killed me," he panted—glancing this way and that,—“why did you not?”

"We are quits then. But it is not too late, Señor de Baçan. On guard!"

Still looking furtively around, he made no motion to raise his bloody point from the ground, but kept edging away.

"Quick, sir! On guard!" I cried, "or I will run you through!"

He made a sudden leap backward and vanished quickly around the corner of the building, passing several Frenchmen, and in the confusion reached the battlements before I could stop him, and with a laugh sprang out into space. Without so much as looking, I leaped after him into the mud and water of the river bank. I landed fair up to my knees and fell over in the water. For a moment I thought my legs had been driven into my body, but managed to get to my feet in time to see my enemy rushing for the thicket. In a second I was after him and plunged through the bushes guided by the gleam of his morion. All around us were shouts of French and Indians and once we passed a half-score red men who were dancing around a poor wretch tied to a tree. They saw us go by and let fly a shower of arrows at both, thinking that I too was an escaping Spaniard. But they did not follow us; they were enjoying too horrid a pleasure to leave. We ran thus for some distance, when, reaching a level space of ground, De Baçan stopped suddenly, awaiting my coming. He leaned with both hands upon his blade, breathing heavily. His face was purple from exertion and the sweat poured from his forehead down his cheeks and into his beard. I was hard put myself for breath and came forward cautiously.

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"Again! Señor Pirato," he sneered, with a kind of a laugh.

"For the last time,—Señor Spaniard!" I said approaching.

"For the last time? Ah! then you do grant I am the better skilled at sword-play?"

"Let us settle the matter at once," said I, bringing my point into line.

"One moment!" he said craftily. "When I kill you, what will become of Mademoiselle?"

I saw his object. He sought to unsteady my nerves. But I only laughed at him.

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"Mademoiselle is in the hands of her friends, Señor.—Come now! Enough! You have your wind. Fall to, or I will run you through!"

I threw off my morion to keep my brow cool. And while in the very act of tossing it aside he leaped for me, engaging with such incomparable swiftness that I broke ground and gave back ten—twenty paces—under his fierce assault. I held my own with great trouble. But he saw no sign of it, upon my face and it is my pride that I ever looked coldly in his eyes, fearless and confident. Once he grazed my arm and with flashing eye sprang forward to follow his advantage; but I met him with so shrewd a guard and thrust that he drew back, looking at me in surprise. We heard indistinctly the cries of the soldiers and the Indians at the fort, and now and then a wild yell would start the echoes in the forest near us. But we fought on, our eyes looking into each other's, glittering and more piercing even than the swords we wielded. Shouting was now most plainly to be heard in the direction from which we had come. I heard Job Goddard's whistle and a cheery cry.

"Keep him at work, sir! we are with you in a minute!" Diego's eyes looked over my shoulder.

"Unless you hurry, Don Diego," I said, coolly bantering him, "there will be little time for this exhibition of sword-play you have promised me."

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I knew could I get him angry that I might have the better advantage.

"Bah!" he cried, furious. "Coward! you cannot fight your battles for yourself!"

"I am holding my own!" I smiled.

I know not just why it was, but strive as he might, he could get no advantage. I have no memory of ever having used my sword so well. Quick as he was, my hand was ever quicker and my eye

seemed by the look of his own to divine his thrust before he made it. The sounds of the voices grew louder and louder each moment and seemed to be near the edge of the wood. The look in the eyes of De Baçan became uncertain. He had tried upon me every feint and thrust he knew, and there I still stood before him smiling and confident. It was not fear that he felt, for I believe the man feared nothing on earth—or above it—or below. It was an expression rather of wonder and curiosity as if at the last he saw in me the image of vengeance come to bring him, in spite of his prowess, the retribution he so amply deserved. Twice he had had me in his power, my death hanging by a web so fine that he could have blasted it by the breath from his lips,—and still I lived.



"QUICK AS HE WAS, MY HAND WAS EVER QUICKER."

All of this I saw in his look. I smiled at him again, and that infuriated him the more. Scorning all thought of defense, he crouched his head and came for me desperately—his feints and thrusts were quicker than thought itself, and my eye, bewildered, could no longer follow the motions. He caught the point of my blade near the hilt of his own, and with a quick back stroke of the wrist sent it flying down, the handle almost out of my fingers. I clutched it again, bringing it up to the guard. But he had sprung in and thrust me through the thigh. At this moment there was an outcry upon our left, and De Brésac, with some of my seamen, came running forward.

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"Good-by, Sir Pirato!" laughed De Baçan. "I have no time to finish this——" and turning, he made for the opposite side of the clearing.

I shouted at the top of my lungs and made a leap after him, but fell prone to the earth. He made for a hole in the thicket, and I thought must surely go free.

But while I looked, a number of dusky figures sprang up all around him, and I saw them leap upon him like hounds upon a stag. He threw his arms out wildly, and one of the savages who bounded into the air, was skewered upon his sword, while another fell away from him into the bushes as though he had been tossed by an ox. The Spaniard was making a wonderful fight, but the Indians, infuriated by the fall of Olotoraca, went rushing fiercely forward crying that he should not escape. One of them pinioned his left arm to his body, and hung with a death-like clutch around his legs. Before Satouriona reached them, another, more successful than the others, sprang upon the back of De Baçan, and, brushing off his morion, struck again and again upon the bare head with his hatchet. When the hollow dulness of the strokes fell upon my ear, I knew that the end had come. He swayed back and forth a moment, striving to keep his feet, unwilling to relinquish his hold upon life, fighting even when death had come; then, with a groan like that of some hunted animal, turned half around and sank to the ground, dead where he had stood.

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When he had fallen the savages fell upon the prostrate body like wolves, tearing at the clothing, and would have beaten him with their war clubs as he lay, had not De Brésac and Satouriona come up. I cried out to them that it was the Commandante of the Fort whom they had killed. De Brésac was among them, striking with the flat of his sword, and crying:

"Stop! you dogs! Away with you! Stop! I say!" He stood over the body with his drawn sword while they glowered at him, and would have struck him down had not Satouriona come between. At last the Paracousi, with a few words, sent them away, their gruesome fancies ungratified.

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It was a dog's death for so valiant a man—pulled down like some wild beast of the forest. When I had been carried to where the body lay, De Brésac and I vowed he should have a decent burial. I hated him, and hate him now. But it was a passion made great by the intensity of it, and I could not bear that the majesty of his prowess should be dimmed by any ignominy at his death. De Brésac, fearing to bury him in the knowledge of the Indians, gave orders to the seamen that he should be taken to Fort San Mateo. When I had bound up my leg, thither we presently repaired, I leaning upon the arms of Job Goddard and Brésac.

AND LAST.

And so it was all over. The mission of De Gourgues was ended. However bloody the retribution he had wrought upon his enemies, France was avenged. I was thankful that my flight into the woods had spared me much of the butchery at Fort San Mateo; what we saw in the forest was horrible enough, and though by the time we returned the Fort had been cleared, a dreadful climax to this grim tragedy was being enacted.

As we entered the postern gate we saw De Gourgues standing,—menacing, sinister and pitiless,—before the ranks of trembling, haggard wretches who had been spared from the massacre. They were not many; and the slenderness of their number was a dire augury of the punishment which was to be theirs. They did not know what was to come. They scanned the merciless man who stood before them, seeking to find in the lines of his face one trace of sorrow or pity. But the eyes where pity might have been were set and fixed; hard as the lines of the nose and mouth. The brows had lost their melancholy and were drawn into a tangle and snarl of wrinkles, which took away every vestige of the man I knew and loved. He returned their look with a glance from which they covered as though he had struck them; a glance that meant but one thing, and that was—the end. A few of them stood upright and fearless; others fell down upon their knees, whimpering. The end—Holy Virgin! What end? What death? When the Avenger spoke, his voice was dry and hard as flint.

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“Did you think,” he said, “that so vile a treachery, so detestable a cruelty, against a King so potent and a nation so fearless, would go unpunished? Hell knows no viler traitor than your master, Menendez de Avilés, of whom you are but the spawn! No! I am only one of the humblest of the subjects of my King, but I have charged myself with avenging the deeds of this Menendez—and yours—against my hapless countrymen. There is no name base enough to brand your actions, no punishment sharp enough to requite them. But though you cannot suffer as you deserve, you shall suffer all that an enemy can honorably inflict, that your example may teach others to observe the peace and alliance between our Kings which you have so perfidiously violated.”

Then he waved his hand, and the wretches were marched out through the gate down to the river. Some of them cried aloud that they would not go. Others clasped the knees of the French arquebusiers, sobbing out like women in their degradation that they had helped to hang the Frenchmen of Fort Caroline, that they had confessed and hoped for mercy. These were rudely dragged to their feet and prodded with pikes until they followed the others, trembling in an agony of fear. When they had come to a place near the river, the Indians pointed out to De Gourgues the trees upon which the Frenchmen of Fort Caroline had hung. De Brésac and I knew them well. And upon these same trees without other speech or ceremony, the Spaniards were hanged.

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After it was over, De Gourgues caused tablets of pine to be nailed over their heads where all men might read. Upon these tablets were inscriptions burned with a hot iron which read:—

“NOT AS TO SPANIARDS,
BUT AS TO TRAITORS, ROBBERS AND
MURDERERS.”

His vengeance was complete.

That night, when it was dark, De Brésac, Job Goddard and another, buried De Baçan deep in a sand-dune. Indian messengers were sent to the river of Tacatacourou to bring the *Vengeance* and others' vessels into the River of May. But at dawn the following morning we saw them passing the forts at the river's mouth and we knew that the anxiety of François Bourdelais had got the better of him. When those on the vessels saw the standards of France waving upon the battlements of the lower forts, their cannon boomed forth a joyous salute which was answered there and at San Mateo. Before noon they anchored near the Fort and I was carried aboard to Mademoiselle.

[364]

I could not suffer her to go ashore while traces of the slaughter were in such ghastly evidence. For there were sights to cloud and torment throughout all recollection a mind innocent of the indecencies of life. Already the vultures were wheeling high over the forest and I prayed that the business which still kept the Avenger would soon be concluded. We were sick of the place, and Mademoiselle and I had no desire to go upon the shore.

In the afternoon Maheera came aboard. Unable to stay at the Tacatacourou River while these great events were going forward, she had followed us and lain in concealment since the attack. To Mademoiselle she brought a message from Olotoraca, who was at the Indian encampment—not dead, but very sorely wounded from the thrust De Baçan had given him—and who wished Mademoiselle to go to him.

I would have deterred her, for I knew not what design he might cherish. Maheera understood me, but she smiled as she had not smiled since I had seen her.

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“The White Giant has no need to fear. Olotoraca knows all, and it is well. He has a great friendship for the White Giant.”

Mademoiselle started up.

"I must go, Sydney. There will be no harm, and if he wishes me I cannot leave this land without seeing him. Maheera would not give me bad counsel."

"The Moon-Princess will take no hurt."

I could not be satisfied to have her out of my sight, but asked Cazenove to take some men and go with her. They were gone a long time, and when they returned Mademoiselle was smiling and tranquil. Olotoraca was very weak, but would recover. He said that I, the White Giant, had parried the blow which had wounded him and so had saved his life. He wished to live fair in the memory of the White Giant,—he was glad that the Moon-Princess was safe with me.

"It is not well," he had said at last, taking Maheera's hand in his, "that a man should love at all unless of the people of his own race."

Had I been able to go to him I would have clasped him heartily by the hand. But they told me I must lie quiet for fear of setting loose an artery, and so I stayed on my pallet fanned by the cool breezes of the sea and blessed by the sight of Diane, who sat near at hand with beaming eyes, ministering to me. [366]

The capture of the Spanish Fort had in one way been a great godsend to her. For in the quarters of the women, De Brésac had found a box full of linen and silks and a few things even that had been brought to Florida by Mademoiselle herself. These the Chevalier sent to her with a gracious word as her share of the spoils. The silks were of no very recent fashion to be sure, but all the gold and silver in the world could not have contributed so much as these to Mademoiselle's content. Nor were they of any particular kind of shape, hanging about her slender figure like lean biscuit-bags. But with ready grace and wit she made shift to fasten and tuck them, so that after all they were none so bad as they might have been. She was so sweet and graceful a sight to my eyes that I feared should I close them I would lose not only the vision but the reality, and find myself again upon the sand-spit,—at Paris,—or in the forest,—seeking her ever with new hopes which were born only to be blasted again and again.

At last I slept; and the morning sun was breaking across the narrow cabin as I wakened. When I had eaten, I felt so strong and well that I would have risen, but Diane pressed me quietly by the shoulders and would not permit it. After awhile, when all was ready, my pallet was carried up on the after-castle, in the shadow of an awning, where I lay with several others and watched the fellows upon the shore. They were busy as bees and I felt a lazy dolt to be lying there twiddling my thumbs. [367]

Two or three times the unruly and riotous spirit, engendered by shedding of blood, broke forth among the Frenchmen; but so complete was the control and discipline which De Gourgues had put upon them that little harm was done. Once they had broken into a wine cask without his knowledge, and there was like to be a repetition of the affair of Cabouche. It is a strange thing that Cabouche himself, who had often made good his boast of bully of the fore-castle, should have been the one to put this small mutiny down. For he stood in the doorway of the wine room pointing his arquebuse toward his companions and vowing he would shoot the one who advanced. It was said, when it was done and they had retreated, that he disappeared into the darkness and took a good paunch-full himself, coming forth with a strong smell of alcohol hanging about him.

In the afternoon there was a wonderful scene. De Gourgues gathered all the Indians about him under the battlements and, through Dariol, made them a long speech. From time to time they uttered loud cries which broke in upon his words. When he had done, a prolonged yell came from the savages and they swarmed over the ill-fated Fort, looking not unlike a swarm of ants upon a hill of their own. They rushed through the living quarters and the barracks and out upon the roofs tearing and rending until it seemed as though some movement of the earth or elements were splitting the buildings to pieces. In two hours the corps-de-garde was razed to the ground. Meanwhile a great number had mounted the battlements and with pikes, pieces of iron, and any rough implements that came to hand, began prying the stones from their places. With savage cries of exultation they tossed these out into the river or threw them in the ditch or thicket. A dust arose which hid them from our sight, but they worked on, as though maddened, in the heat and glare until sundown, when not one stone was left upon another. It was a whirlwind of ruin. [368]

That night when I heard the preparations above me for sailing on the morrow, it seemed impossible that only a week and three days had passed since we had come to anchor in the Tacatacourou—since we had made our league—found Mademoiselle—passed the hardships of the march and attack, and come to the successful ending of our expedition. De Gourgues said little. When he had finished speaking to the Indians he had come aboard and set all the seamen to work stowing the vessel and breaking out the spars and sails for the voyage. That night Mademoiselle and Maheera bade a tearful good-by, for they had come to love each other with a fond affection; and to this day I cannot forget the services the Indian maiden did for me and mine. On the morrow the anchors were broken out, and with a favoring breeze we moved slowly down the river toward the sea; while the Indians, shouting messages of good will to us, ran along the banks until the freshening wind had driven us from their sight. [369]

When the ships passed the smaller forts I could see that there too the work of destruction had been complete; for the stones and fascines were scattered in all directions, and only a few overturned and broken gun rests showed where the bastions had been. We sailed out over the bar at high tide and with a last salute to our friendly hosts we set our prow squarely abreast the broad surges, for France. In a few days I could almost crawl about the decks without an arm to

steady me. In two weeks I went about some simple duties; and in the long summer twilights, Mademoiselle and I would sit high up on the slanting after-castle near the lanthorns, looking back down the pink, swirling wake toward the land where we had both suffered so much. Of De Baçan we spoke but once. I let fall a word of regret that so gallant and splendid a fighter should have been of so ill-favored a disposition. But Mademoiselle made me no reply. With the thought how near she had come to falling into his hands after the capture of Fort Caroline, she shuddered, drew closer to me and would hear of him no more. We had too many present joys to conjure up the miseries that were past. We had been born into a new world of our own and we peopled it with fancies as blithe as ourselves. Under the laughing stars we were creatures of unreality, unconscious of all save the great love which had conquered everything. De Gourgues sat with us sometimes, but not for long; for there is no pain keener than that which comes from seeing a forbidden joy through the eyes of another.

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My tale is soon ended. We reached Rochelle after a voyage of little event, and were greeted with great honor. So soon as it could be accomplished,—and that was with such speed of habit and frock making as was never known before or since,—Diane and I were married. The endurance and strength of heart which bore her up in all her sufferings among those wild western forests has, to this day of our age and contentment, been my sturdiest prop in time of stress. I need not tell at length how, through Coligny, the prize money for the *San Cristobal* was turned over at last to Captain Hooper; and how upon a certain successful voyage from Plymouth I came to be his second in command, nor how I owned my own vessel before my mistress had Dominique and little Diane well out of their swaddling clothes. The Chevalier de Brésac has come back from his voyage with Sir Walter Raleigh. M. de Teligny is dead, leaving the Chevalier a great fortune, and he is now out upon a venture of his own. Job Goddard, hoary headed and staunch, but convincing and windy-worded as ever, sits smoking at his window in the Pelican with Martin Cockrem. And the two rogues, gathering the growing youth of the docks about them, with easy elaboration, tell wonderful yarns of voyages to strange countries where people walk upside down, and of a preference use their toes for fingers, to which the urchins listen, their wide mouths agape and their eyes agog with curiosity. Job has set about planting a patch of tobacco at Plymouth; but his pursuit has fared ill, and so he gets the leaf in bales from the ships that come laden to Plymouth from the western main.

[371]

It is history how De Gourgues was spurned at Paris by that weakling, Charles; how our own good Queen Bess of England offered him a command, and how Charles thereupon relented, and would have given him a position of authority. But De Gourgues was never a stranger to adversity; and through it all, his great grief has ever been that Menendez de Avilés escaped the vengeance at San Mateo, of which he had been the dearest object. This malefactor died full of honor and riches, high in the favor of Philip of Spain, who, had he lived, would have given him command of the great Armada.

[372]

That Spanish fleet, so long threatened, has come and gone. Through the good offices of Sir Francis Drake and Lord Howard, for both of whom my father had performed some service, I was given considerable responsibility and command upon Drake's own *Revenge*, acquitting myself to the great Admiral's satisfaction. So that I came into the royal service again as commander of the *White Bear*, and gained for myself many emoluments and honors. By great good fortune I thus won my way into the notice of the Queen, and so, through her generosity, was enabled in some sort to restore my family to the prestige it had enjoyed before the imprudences and generousities of my grandfather and father had depleted the value of the estates. I lay no claim to credit for these achievements. Had it not been for Diane, I should have made no attempt to regain the position of my family before the Court. Her soft influences, strong and womanly, have weaned me away from the boisterous habits of my wild young life, and have shown me the value of the refinements which come of gentle living: With the death of the Queen Mother, in France, there came, too, a change in the fortunes of Diane and the great Henry—the greatest, Henry of Navarre,—with that rare grace which has ever distinguished him, has given back again the estate of La Notte, at Villeneuve, to my wife. Thither, at certain seasons, we go; forming thus another link, not without a certain value, between two great Christian monarchs.

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Diane has built a summer-house on her estate, and she has fashioned it after the lodge of Olotoraca, where during those long months she waited for me. It is not in a wild pine forest, where every night the winds may sing their grand and lonely psalms. It is on the borders of a quiet lake, where soft sweeping willows whisper with the rippling water, and tall poplars, like sentinels, guard us against the legions of unrest. When the sun has set, and the slender moon has sailed out across the deep green vault above us, then we sit, hand-in-hand, dreaming and at peace, I—and Mademoiselle.

THE END.

Transcriber's Notes:

Punctuation and spelling inaccuracies were silently corrected.

Archaic and variable spelling has been preserved.

Variations in hyphenation and compound words have been preserved.

Incorrect chapter numbers for Chapters XXIV (p. 329), XXV (p. 344) and XXVI (p. 361) were

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN SEARCH OF MADEMOISELLE ***

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