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THE BATTLE OF THE STRONG

[A ROMANCE OF TWO KINGDOMS]

By Gilbert Parker

Volume 5.

CHAPTER XXXI

When Ranulph returned to his little house at St. Aubin's Bay night had fallen. Approaching he saw there was no light in the windows. The blinds were not drawn, and no glimmer of fire came from the chimney. He hesitated at the door, for he instinctively felt that something must have happened to his father. He was just about to enter, however, when some one came hurriedly round the corner of the house.

"Whist, boy," said a voice; "I've news for you." Ranulph recognised the voice as that of Dormy Jamais. Dormy plucked at his sleeve. "Come with me, boy," said he.

"Come inside if you want to tell me something," answered Ranulph.

"Ah bah, not for me! Stone walls have ears. I'll tell only you and the wind that hears and runs away."

"I must speak to my father first," answered Ranulph.

"Come with me, I've got him safe," Dormy chuckled to himself.

Ranulph's heavy hand dropped on his shoulder. "What's that you're saying--my father with you! What's the matter?"

As though oblivious of Ranulph's hand Dormy went on chuckling.

"Whoever burns me for a fool 'll lose their ashes. Des monz a fous--I have a head! Come with me." Ranulph saw that he must humour the shrewd natural, so he said:

"Et ben, put your four shirts in five bundles and come along." He was a true Jerseyman at heart, and speaking to such as Dormy Jamais he used the homely patois phrases. He knew there was no use hurrying the little man, he would take his own time.

"There's been the devil to pay," said Dormy as he ran towards the shore, his sabots going clac--clac, clac--clac. "There's been the devil to pay in St. Heliens, boy." He spoke scarcely above a whisper.

"Tcheche--what's that?" said Ranulph. But Dormy was not to uncover his pot of roses till his own time. "That connetable's got no more wit than

a square bladed knife," he rattled on. "But gache-a-penn, I'm hungry!"
And as he ran he began munching a lump of bread he took from his pocket.

For the next five minutes they went on in silence. It was quite dark, and as they passed up Market Hill--called Ghost Lane because of the Good Little People who made it their highway--Dormy caught hold of Ranulph's coat and trotted along beside him. As they went, tokens of the life within came out to them through doorway and window. Now it was the voice of a laughing young mother:

"Si tu as faim
Manges ta main
Et gardes l'autre pour demain;
Et ta tete
Pour le jour de fete;
Et ton gros ortee
Pour le Jour Saint Norbe"

And again:

"Let us pluck the bill of the lark,
The lark from head to tail--"

He knew the voice. It was that of a young wife of the parish of St. Saviour: married happily, living simply, given a frugal board, after the manner of her kind, and a comradeship for life. For the moment he felt little but sorrow for himself. The world seemed to be conspiring against him: the chorus of Fate was singing behind the scenes, singing of the happiness of others in sardonic comment on his own final unhappiness. Yet despite the pain of finality there was on him something of the apathy of despair.

From another doorway came fragments of a song sung at a veille. The door was open, and he could see within the happy gathering of lads and lassies in the light of the crasset. There was the spacious kitchen, its beams and rafters dark with age, adorned with fitches of bacon, huge loaves resting in the raellyi beneath the centre beam, the broad open hearth, the flaming fire of logs, and the great brass pan shining like fresh-coined gold, on its iron tripod over the logs. Lassies in their short woollen petticoats, and bedgones of blue and lilac, with boisterous lads, were stirring the contents of the vast bashin--many cabots of apples, together with sugar, lemon-peel, and cider; the old ladies in mob-caps tied under the chin, measuring out the nutmeg and cinnamon to complete the making of the black butter: a jocund recreation for all, and at all times.

In one corner was a fiddler, and on the veille, flourished for the occasion with satinettes and fern, sat two centeniers and the prevot, singing an old song in the patois of three parishes.

Ranulph looked at the scene lingeringly. Here he was, with mystery and peril to hasten his steps, loitering at the spot where the light of home streamed out upon the roadway. But though he lingered, somehow he seemed

withdrawn from all these things; they were to him now as pictures of a distant past.

Dormy plucked at his coat. "Come, come, lift your feet, lift your feet," said he; "it's no time to walk in slippers. The old man will be getting scared, oui-gia!" Ranulph roused himself. Yes, yes, he must hurry on. He had not forgotten his father, but something held him here; as though Fate were whispering in his ear. What does it matter now? While yet you may, feed on the sight of happiness. So the prisoner going to execution seizes one of the few moments left to him for prayer, to look lingeringly upon what he leaves, as though to carry into the dark a clear remembrance of it all.

Moving on quietly in a kind of dream, Ranulph was roused again by Dormy's voice: "On Sunday I saw three magpies, and there was a wedding that day. Tuesday I saw two--that's for joy--and fifty Jersey prisoners of the French comes back on Jersey that day. This morning one I saw. One magpie is for trouble, and trouble's here. One doesn't have eyes for naught--no, bidemme!"

Ranulph's patience was exhausted.

"Bachouar," he exclaimed roughly, "you make elephants out of fleas! You've got no more news than a conch-shell has music. A minute and you'll have a back-hander that'll put you to sleep, Maitre Dormy."

If he had been asked his news politely Dormy would have been still more cunningly reticent. To abuse him in his own argot was to make him loose his bag of mice in a flash.

"Bachouar yourself, Maitre Ranulph! You'll find out soon. No news--no trouble--eh! Par made, Mattingley's gone to the Vier Prison--he! The baker's come back, and the Connetable's after Olivier Delagarde. No trouble, pardingue, if no trouble, Dormy Jamais's a batd'lagoule and no need for father of you to hide in a place that only Dormy knows--my good!"

So at last the blow had fallen; after all these years of silence, sacrifice, and misery. The futility of all that he had done and suffered for his father's sake came home to Ranulph. Yet his brain was instantly alive. He questioned Dormy rapidly and adroitly, and got the story from him in patches.

The baker Carcaud, who, with Olivier Delagarde, betrayed the country into the hands of Rullecour years ago, had, with a French confederate of Mattingley's, been captured in attempting to steal Jean Touzel's boat, the *Hardi Biauou*. At the capture the confederate had been shot. Before dying he implicated Mattingley in several robberies, and a notorious case of piracy of three months before, committed within gunshot of the men-of-war lying in the tide-way. Carcaud, seriously wounded, to save his life turned King's evidence, and disclosed to the Royal Court in private his own guilt and Olivier Delagarde's treason.

Hidden behind the great chair of the Bailly himself, Dormy Jamais had heard the whole business. This had brought him hot-foot to St. Aubin's Bay, whence he had hurried Olivier Delagarde to a hiding-place in the hills above the bay of St. Brelade. The fool had travelled more swiftly than Jersey justice, whose feet are heavy. Elie Mattingley was now in the Vier Prison. There was the whole story.

The mask had fallen, the game was up. Well, at least there would be no more lying, no more brutalising inward shame. All at once it appeared to Ranulph madness that he had not taken his father away from Jersey long ago. Yet too he knew that as things had been with Guida he could never have stayed away.

Nothing was left but action. He must get his father clear of the island and that soon. But how? and where should they go? He had a boat in St. Aubin's Bay: getting there under cover of darkness he might embark with his father and set sail--whither? To Sark--there was no safety there. To Guernsey--that was no better. To France--yes, that was it, to the war of the Vendee, to join Detricand. No need to find the scrap of paper once given him in the Vier Marchi. Wherever Detricand might be, his fame was the highway to him. All France knew of the companion of de la Rochejaquelein, the fearless Comte de Tournay. Ranulph made his decision. Shamed and dishonoured in Jersey, in that holy war of the Vendee he would find something to kill memory, to take him out of life without disgrace. His father must go with him to France, and bide his fate there also.

By the time his mind was thus made up, they had reached the lonely headland dividing Portelet Bay from St. Brelade's. Dark things were said of this spot, and the country folk of the island were wont to avoid it. Beneath the cliffs in the sea was a rocky islet called Janvrin's Tomb. One Janvrin, ill of a fell disease, and with his fellows forbidden by the Royal Court to land, had taken refuge here, and died wholly neglected and without burial. Afterwards his body lay exposed till the ravens and vultures devoured it, and at last a great storm swept his bones off into the sea. Strange lights were to be seen about this rock, and though wise men guessed them mortal glimmerings, easily explained, they sufficed to give the headland immunity from invasion.

To a cave at this point Dormy Jamais had brought the trembling Olivier Delagarde, unrepenting and peevish, but with a craven fear of the Royal Court and a furious populace quickening his footsteps. This hiding-place was entered at low tide by a passage from a larger cave. It was like a little vaulted chapel floored with sand and shingle. A crevice through rock and earth to the world above let in the light and out the smoke.

Here Olivier Delagarde sat crouched over a tiny fire, with some bread and a jar of water at his hand, gesticulating and talking to himself. The long white hair and beard, with the benevolent forehead, gave him the look of some latter-day St. Helier, grieving for the sins and praying for the sorrows of mankind; but from the hateful mouth came profanity fit only for the dreadful communion of a Witches' Sabbath.

Hearing the footsteps of Ranulph and Dormy, he crouched and shivered in terror, but Ranulph, who knew too well his revolting cowardice, called to him reassuringly. On their approach he stretched out his talon-like fingers in a gesture of entreaty.

"You'll not let them hang me, Ranulph--you'll save me," he whimpered.

"Don't be afraid, they shall not hang you," Ranulph replied quietly, and began warming his hands at the fire. "You'll swear it, Ranulph--on the Bible?"

"I've told you they shall not hang you. You ought to know by now whether I mean what I say," his son answered more sharply.

Assuredly Ranulph meant that his father should not be hanged. Whatever the law was, whatever wrong the old man had done, it had been atoned for; the price had been paid by both. He himself had drunk the cup of shame to the dregs, but now he would not swallow the dregs. An iron determination entered into him. He had endured all that he would endure from man. He had set out to defend Olivier Delagarde from the worst that might happen, and he was ready to do so to the bitter end. His scheme of justice might not be that of the Royal Court, but he would defend it with his life. He had suddenly grown hard--and dangerous.

CHAPTER XXXII

The Royal Court was sitting late. Candles had been brought to light the long desk or dais where sat the Bailly in his great chair, and the twelve scarlet-robed jurats. The Attorney-General stood at his desk, mechanically scanning the indictment read against prisoners charged with capital crimes. His work was over, and according to his lights he had done it well. Not even the Undertaker's Apprentice could have been less sensitive to the struggles of humanity under the heel of fate and death. A plaintive complacency, a little righteous austerity, and an agreeable expression of hunger made the Attorney-General a figure in godly contrast to the prisoner awaiting his doom in the iron cage opposite.

There was a singular stillness in this sombre Royal Court, where only a tallow candle or two and a dim lanthorn near the door filled the room with flickering shadows--great heads upon the wall drawing close together, and vast lips murmuring awful secrets. Low whisperings came through the dusk like mournful nightwinds carrying tales of awe through a heavy forest. Once in the long silence a figure rose up silently, and stealing across the room to a door near the jury box, tapped upon it with a pencil. A moment's pause, the door opened slightly, and another shadowy figure appeared, whispered, and vanished. Then the first figure closed the door again silently, and came and spoke softly up to the Bailly, who yawned in his hand, sat back in his chair, and drummed his fingers upon the arm. Thereupon the other--the greffier of the court--settled down at his desk beneath the jurats, and peered into an open book before him, his

eyes close to the page, reading silently by the meagre light of a candle from the great desk behind him.

Now a fat and ponderous avocat rose up and was about to speak, but the Bailly, with a peevish gesture, waved him down, and he settled heavily into place again.

At last the door at which the greffier had tapped opened, and a gaunt figure in a red robe came out. Standing in the middle of the room he motioned towards the great pew opposite the Attorney-General. Slowly the twenty-four men of the grand jury following him filed into place and sat themselves down in the shadows. Then the gaunt figure--the Vicomte or high sheriff--bowing to the Bailly and the jurats, went over and took his seat beside the Attorney-General. Whereupon the Bailly leaned forward and droned a question to the Grand Enquete in the shadow. One rose up from among the twenty-four, and out of the dusk there came in reply to the Judge a squeaking voice:

"We find the Prisoner at the Bar more Guilty than Innocent."

A shudder ran through the court. But some one not in the room shuddered still more violently. From the gable window of a house in the Rue des Tres Pigeons, a girl had sat the livelong day, looking, looking into the court-room. She had watched the day decline, the evening come, and the lighting of the crassets and the candles, and had waited to hear the words that meant more to her than her own life. At last the great moment came, and she could hear the foreman's voice whining the fateful words, "More Guilty than Innocent."

It was Carterette Mattingley, and the prisoner at the bar was her father.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Mattingley's dungeon was infested with rats and other vermin, he had only straw for his bed, and his food and drink were bread and water. The walls were damp with moisture from the Fauxbie running beneath, and a mere glimmer of light came through a small barred window. Superstition had surrounded the Vier Prison with horrors. As carts passed under the great archway, its depth multiplied the sounds so powerfully, the echoes were so fantastic, that folk believed them the roarings of fiendish spirits. If a mounted guard hurried through, the reverberation of the drum-beats and the clatter of hoofs were so uncouth that children stopped their ears and fled in terror. To the ignorant populace the Vier Prison was the home of noisome serpents and the rendezvous of the devil and his witches of Rocbert.

When therefore the seafaring merchant of the Vier Marchi, whose massive, brass-studded bahue had been as a gay bazaar where the gentry of Jersey refreshed their wardrobes, with one eye closed--when he was transferred to the Vier Prison, little wonder he should become a dreadful being round

whom played the lightnings of dark fancy. Elie Mattingley the popular sinner, with insolent gold rings in his ears, unchallenged as to how he came by his merchandise, was one person; Elie Mattingley, a torch for the burning, and housed amid the terrors of the Vier Prison, was another.

Few people in Jersey slept the night before his execution. Here and there kind-hearted women or unimportant men lay awake through pity, and a few through a vague sense of loss; for, henceforth, the Vier Marchi would lack a familiar interest; but mostly the people of Mattingley's world were wakeful through curiosity. Morbid expectation of the hanging had for them a gruesome diversion. The thing itself would break the daily monotony of life and provide hushed gossip for vrait gatherings and veilles for a long time to come. Thus Elie Mattingley would not die in vain!

Here was one sensation, but there was still another. Olivier Delagarde had been unmasked, and the whole island had gone tracking him down. No aged toothless tiger was ever sported through the jungle by an army of shikarris with hungrier malice than was this broken traitor by the people he had betrayed. Ensued, therefore, a commingling of patriotism with lust of man-hunting and eager expectation of to-morrow's sacrifice.

Nothing of this excitement disturbed Mattingley. He did not sleep, but that was because he was still watching for a means of escape. He felt his chances diminish, however, when about midnight an extra guard was put round the prison. Something had gone amiss in the matter of his rescue.

Three things had been planned.

Firstly, he was to try escape by the small window of the dungeon.

Secondly, Carterette was to bring Sebastian Alixandre to the prison disguised as a sorrowing aunt of the condemned. Alixandre was suddenly to overpower the jailer, Mattingley was to make a rush for freedom, and a few bold spirits without would second his efforts and smuggle him to the sea. The directing mind and hand in the business were Ranulph Delagarde's. He was to have his boat waiting to respond to a signal from the shore, and to make sail for France, where he and his father were to be landed. There he was to give Mattingley, Alixandre, and Carterette his craft to fare across the seas to the great fishing-ground of Gaspe in Canada.

Lastly, if these plans failed, the executioner was to be drugged with liquor, his besetting weakness, on the eve of the hanging.

The first plan had been found impossible, the window being too small for even Mattingley's head to get through. The second had failed because the righteous Royal Court forbade Carterette the prison, intent that she should no longer be contaminated by so vile a wretch as her father. For years this same Christian solicitude had looked down from the windows of the Cohue Royale upon this same criminal in the Vier Marchi, with one blind eye for himself the sinner and an open one for his merchandise.

Mattingley could hear the hollow sound of the sentinels' steps under the archway of the Vier Prison. He was quite stoical. If he had to die, then he had to die. Death could only be a little minute of agony; and for what came after--well, he had not thought fearfully of that, and he had no wish to think of it at all. The visiting chaplain had talked, and he had not listened. He had his own ideas about life, and death, and the beyond, and they were not ungenerous. The chaplain had found him patient but impossible, kindly but unresponsive, sometimes even curious, but without remorse.

"You should repent with sorrow and a contrite heart," said the clergyman. "You have done many evil things in your life, Mattingley."

Mattingley had replied: "Ma fuifre, I can't remember them! I know I never done them, for I never done anything but good all my life--so much for so much." He had argued it out with himself and he believed he was a good man. He had been open-handed, had stood by his friends, and, up to a few days ago, was counted a good citizen; for many had come to profit through him. His trade--a little smuggling, a little piracy? Was not the former hallowed by distinguished patronage, and had it not existed from immemorial time? It was fair fight for gain, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. If he hadn't robbed others on the high seas, they would probably have robbed him--and sometimes they did. His spirit was that of the Elizabethan admirals; he belonged to a century not his own. As for the crime for which he was to suffer, it had been the work of another hand, and very bad work it was, to try and steal Jean Touzel's *Hardi Biaou*, and then bungle it. He had had nothing to do with it, for he and Jean Touzel were the best of friends, as was proved by the fact that while he lay in his dungeon, Jean wandered the shore sorrowing for his fate.

Thinking now of the whole business and of his past life, Mattingley suddenly had a pang. Yes, remorse smote him at last. There was one thing on his conscience--only one. He had respect for the feelings of others, and where the Church was concerned this was mingled with a droll sort of pity, as of the greater for the lesser, the wise for the helpless. For clergymen he had a half-affectionate contempt. He remembered now that when, five years ago, his confederate who had turned out so badly--he had trusted him, too! had robbed the church of St. Michael's, carrying off the great chest of communion plate, offertories, and rents, he had piously left behind in Mattingley's house the vestry-books and parish-register; a nice definition in rogues' ethics. Awaiting his end now, it smote Mattingley's soul that these stolen records had not been returned to St. Michael's. Next morning he must send word to Carterette to restore the books. Then his conscience would be clear once more. With this resolve quieting his mind, he turned over on his straw and went peacefully to sleep.

Hours afterwards he waked with a yawn. There was no start, no terror, but the appearance of the jailer with the chaplain roused in him disgust for the coming function at the *Mont es Pendus*. Disgust was his chief feeling. This was no way for a man to die! With a choice of evils he should have preferred walking the plank, or even dying quietly in his

bed, to being stifled by a rope. To dangle from a cross-tree like a half-filled bag offended all instincts of picturesqueness, and first and last he had been picturesque.

He asked at once for pencil and paper. His wishes were obeyed with deference. On the whole he realised by the attentions paid him--the brandy and the food offered by the jailer, the fluttering kindness of the chaplain--that in the life of a criminal there is one moment when he commands the situation. He refused the brandy, for he was strongly against spirits in the early morning, but asked for coffee. Eating seemed superfluous--and a man might die more gaily on an empty stomach. He assured the chaplain that he had come to terms with his conscience and was now about to perform the last act of a well-intentioned life.

There and then he wrote to Carterette, telling her about the vestry-books of St. Michael's, and begging that she should restore them secretly.

There were no affecting messages; they understood each other. He knew that when it was possible she would never fail to come to the mark where he was concerned, and she had equal faith in him. So the letter was sealed, addressed with flourishes, he was proud of his handwriting, and handed to the chaplain for Carterette.

He had scarcely drunk his coffee when there was a roll of drums outside. Mattingley knew that his hour was come, and yet to his own surprise he had no violent sensations. He had a shock presently, however, for on the jailer announcing the executioner, who should be there before him but the Undertaker's Apprentice! In politeness to the chaplain Mattingley forbore profanity. This was the one Jerseyman for whom he had a profound hatred, this youth with the slow, cold, watery blue eye, a face that never wrinkled either with mirth or misery, the square-set teeth always showing a little--an involuntary grimace of cruelty. Here was insult.

"Devil below us, so you're going to do it--you!" broke out Mattingley.

"The other man was drunk," said the Undertaker's Apprentice. "He's been full as a jug three days. He got drunk too soon." The grimace seemed to widen. "O my good!" said Mattingley, and he would say no more. To him words were like nails--of no use unless they were to be driven home by acts.

To Mattingley the procession of death was stupidly slow. As it issued from the archway of the Vier Prison between mounted guards, and passed through a long lane of moving spectators, he looked round coolly. One or two bold spirits cried out: "Head up to the wind, Maitre Elie!"

"Oui-gia," he replied; "devil a top-sail in!" and turned a look of contempt on those who hooted him. He realised now that there was no chance of rescue. The militia and the town guard were in ominous force, and although his respect for the island military was not devout, a bullet from the musket of a fool might be as effective as one from Bonapend's--as Napoleon Bonaparte was disdainfully called in Jersey. Yet he could not but wonder why all the plans of Alixandre, Carterette, and Ranulph had gone for nothing; even the hangman had been got drunk too soon! He

had a high opinion of Ranulph, and that he should fail him was a blow to his judgment of humanity.

He was thoroughly disgusted. Also they had compelled him to put on a white shirt, he who had never worn linen in his life. He was ill at ease in it. It made him conspicuous; it looked as though he were aping the gentleman at the last. He tried to resign himself, but resignation was hard to learn so late in life. Somehow he could not feel that this was really the day of his death. Yet how could it be otherwise? There was the Vicomte in his red robe, there was the sinister Undertaker's Apprentice, ready to do his hangman's duty. There, as they crossed the mielles, while the sea droned its sing-song on his left, was the parson droning his sing-song on the right "In the midst of life we are in death," etc. There were the grumbling drums, and the crowd morbidly enjoying their Roman holiday; and there, looming up before him, were the four stone pillars on the Mont es Pendus from which he was to swing. His disgust deepened. He was not dying like a seafarer who had fairly earned his reputation.

His feelings found vent even as he came to the foot of the platform where he was to make his last stand, and the guards formed a square about the great pillars, glooming like Druidic altars. He burst forth in one phrase expressive of his feelings.

"Sacre matin--so damned paltry!" he said, in equal tribute to two races.

The Undertaker's Apprentice, thinking this a reflection upon his arrangements, said, with a wave of the hand to the rope:

"Nannin, ch'est tres ship-shape, Maitre!"

The Undertaker's Apprentice was wrong. He had made everything ship-shape, as he thought, but a gin had been set for him. The rope to be used at the hanging had been measured and approved by the Vicomte, and the Undertaker's Apprentice had carried it to his room at the top of the Cohue Royale. In the dead of night, however, Dormy Jamais drew it from under the mattress whereon the deathman slept, and substituted one a foot longer. This had been Ranulph's idea as a last resort, for he had a grim wish to foil the law even at the twelfth hour.

The great moment had come. The shouts and hootings ceased. Out of the silence there arose only the champing of a horse's bit or the hysterical giggle of a woman. The high painful drone of the chaplain's voice was heard.

Then came the fatal "Maintenant!" from the Vicomte, the platform fell, and Elie Mattingley dropped the length of the rope.

What was the consternation of the Vicomte and the hangman, and the horror of the crowd, to see that Mattingley's toes just touched the ground! The body shook and twisted. The man was being slowly strangled, not hanged.

The Undertaker's Apprentice was the only person who kept a cool head.

The solution of the problem of the rope for afterwards, but he had been sent there to hang a man, and a man he would hang somehow. Without more ado he jumped upon Mattingley's shoulders and began to drag him down.

That instant Ranulph Delagarde burst through the mounted guard and the militia. Rushing to the Vicomte, he exclaimed:

"Shame! The man was to be hung, not strangled. This is murder. Stop it, or I'll cut the rope." He looked round on the crowd. "Cowards-- cowards," he cried, "will you see him murdered?"

He started forward to drag away the deathmann, but the Vicomte, thoroughly terrified at Ranulph's onset, himself seized the Undertaker's Apprentice, who, drawing off with unruffled malice, watched what followed with steely eyes.

Dragged down by the weight of the Apprentice, Mattingley's feet were now firmly on the ground. While the excited crowd tried to break through the cordon of mounted guards, Mattingley, by a twist and a jerk, freed his corded hands. Loosing the rope at his neck he opened his eyes and looked around him, dazed and dumb.

The Apprentice came forward. "I'll shorten the rope oui-gia! Then you shall see him swing," he grumbled viciously to the Vicomte.

The gaunt Vicomte was trembling with excitement. He looked helplessly around him.

The Apprentice caught hold of the rope to tie knots in it and so shorten it, but Ranulph again appealed to the Vicomte.

"You've hung the man," said he; "you've strangled him and you didn't kill him. You've got no right to put that rope round his neck again."

Two jurats who had waited on the outskirts of the crowd, furtively watching the effect of their sentence, burst in, as distracted as the Vicomte.

"Hang the man again and the whole world will laugh at you," Ranulph said. "If you're not worse than fools or Turks you'll let him go. He has had death already. Take him back to the prison then, if you're afraid to free him." He turned on the crowd fiercely. "Have you nothing to say to this butchery?" he cried. "For the love of God, haven't you anything to say?"

Half the crowd shouted "Let him go free!" and the other half, disappointed in the working out of the gruesome melodrama, groaned and hooted.

Meanwhile Mattingley stood as still as ever he had stood by his bahue in the Vier Marchi, watching--waiting.

The Vicomte conferred nervously with the jurats for a moment, and then

turned to the guard.

"Take the prisoner to the Vier Prison," he said. Mattingley had been slowly solving the problem of his salvation. His eye, like a gimlet, had screwed its way through Ranulph's words into what lay behind, and at last he understood the whole beautiful scheme. It pleased him: Carterette had been worthy of herself, and of him. Ranulph had played his game well too. He only failed to do justice to the poor begonne, Dormy Jamais. But then the virtue of fools is its own reward. As the procession started back with the Undertaker's Apprentice now following after Mattingley, not going before, Mattingley turned to him, and with a smile of malice said:

"Ch'est tres ship-shape, Maitre-eh!" and he jerked his head back towards the inadequate rope.

He was not greatly troubled about the rest of this grisly farce. He was now ready for breakfast, and his appetite grew as he heard how the crowd hooted and snarled yah! at the Undertaker's Apprentice. He was quite easy about the future. What had been so well done thus far could not fail in the end.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Events proved Mattingley right. Three days after, it was announced that he had broken prison. It is probable that the fury of the Royal Court at the news was not quite sincere, for it was notable that the night of his evasion, suave and uncrestfallen, they dined in state at the Tres Pigeons. The escape gave them happy issue from a quandary.

The Vicomte officially explained that Mattingley had got out by the dungeon window. People came to see the window, and there, *ba su*, the bars were gone! But that did not prove the case, and the mystery was deepened by the fact that Jean Touzel, whose head was too small for Elie's hat, could not get that same head through the dungeon window. Having proved so much, Jean left the mystery there, and returned to his *Hardi Biaou*.

This happened on the morning after the dark night when Mattingley, Carterette, and Alixandre hurried from the Vier Prison, through the Rue des Sablons to the sea, and there boarded Ranulph's boat, wherein was Olivier Delagarde the traitor.

Accompanying Carterette to the shore was a little figure that moved along beside them like a shadow, a little grey figure that carried a gold-headed cane. At the shore this same little grey figure bade Mattingley good-bye with a quavering voice. Whereupon Carterette, her face all wet with tears, kissed him upon both cheeks, and sobbed so that she could scarcely speak. For now when it was all done--all the horrible ordeal over--the woman in her broke down before the little old gentleman, who

had been like a benediction in the house where the ten commandments were imperfectly upheld. But she choked down her sobs, and thinking of another more than of herself, she said:

"Dear Chevalier, do not forget the book--that register--I gave you to-night. Read it--read the last writing in it, and then you will know--ah, bide me--but you will know that her we love--ah, but you must read it and tell nobody till--till the right time comes! She hasn't held her tongue for naught, and it's only fair to do as she's done all along, and hold ours. Pardingue, but my heart hurts me!" she added suddenly, and catching the hand that held the little gold cane she kissed it with impulsive ardour. "You have been so good to me--oui-gia!" she said with a gulp, and then she dropped the hand and turned and fled to the boat rocking in the surf.

The little Chevalier watched the boat glide out into the gloom of night, and waited till he knew that they must all be aboard Ranulph's schooner and making for the sea. Then he turned and went back to the empty house in the Rue d'Egypte.

Opening the book Carterette had placed in his hands before they left the house, he turned up and scanned closely the last written page. A moment after, he started violently, his eyes dilating, first with wonder, then with a bewildered joy; and then, Protestant though he was, with the instinct of long-gone forefathers, he made the sacred gesture, and said:

"Now I have not lived and loved in vain, thanks be to God!"

Even as joy opened wide the eyes of the Chevalier, who had been sorely smitten through the friends of his heart, out at sea Night and Death were closing the eyes of another wan old man who had been a traitor to his country.

For the boat of the fugitives had scarcely cleared reefs and rocks, and reached the open Channel, when Olivier Delagarde, uttering the same cry as when Ranulph and the soldiers had found him wounded in the Grouville road sixteen years before, suddenly started up from where he had lain mumbling, and whispering incoherently, "Ranulph--they've killed me!" fell back dead.

True to the instinct which had kept him faithful to one idea for sixteen years, and in spite of the protests of Mattingley and Carterette--of the despairing Carterette who felt the last thread of her hopes snap with his going--Ranulph made ready to leave them. Bidding them good-bye, he placed his father's body in the rowboat, and pulling back to the shore of St. Aubin's Bay with his pale freight, carried it on his shoulders up to the little house where he had lived so many years. There he kept the death-watch alone.

Guida knew nothing of the arrest and trial of Mattingley until he had been condemned to death. Nor until then did she know anything of what had happened to Olivier Delagarde; for soon after her interview with Ranulph she had gone a-marketing to the Island of Sark, with the results of half a year's knitting. Her return had been delayed by ugly gales from the south east. Several times a year she made this journey, landing at the Eperquerie Rocks as she had done one day long ago, and selling her beautiful wool caps and jackets to the farmers and fisher-folk, getting in kind for what she gave.

When she made these excursions to Sark, Dormy Jamais had always remained at the little house, milking her cow, feeding her fowls, and keeping all in order--as perfect a sentinel as old Biribi, and as faithful. For the first time in his life, however, Dormy Jamais was unfaithful. On the day that Carcaud the baker and Mattingley were arrested, he deserted the hut at Plemont to exploit, with Ranulph, the adventure which was at last to save Olivier Delagarde and Mattingley from death. But he had been unfaithful only in the letter of his bond. He had gone to the house of Jean Touzel, through whose Hardi Biaou the disaster had come, and had told Maitresse Aimable that she must go to Plemont in his stead--for a fool must keep his faith whate'er the worldly wise may do. So the fat Femme de Ballast, puffing with every step, trudged across the island to Plemont, and installed herself as keeper of the house.

One day Maitresse Aimable's quiet was invaded by two signalmen who kept watch, not far from Guida's home, for all sail, friend or foe, bearing in sight. They were now awaiting the new Admiral of the Jersey station and his fleet. With churlish insolence they entered Guida's hut before Maitresse Aimable could prevent it. Looking round, they laughed meaningly, and then told her that the commander coming presently to lie with his fleet in Grouville Bay was none other than the sometime Jersey midshipman, now Admiral Prince Philip d'Avranche, Duc de Bercy. Understanding then the meaning of their laughter, and the implied insult to Guida, Maitresse Aimable's voice came ravaging out of the silence where it lay hid so often and so long, and the signalmen went their ways shamefacedly.

She could not make head or tail of her thoughts now, nor see an inch before her nose; all she could feel was an aching heart for Guida. She had heard strange tales of how Philip had become Prince Philip d'Avranche, and husband of the Comtesse Chantavoine, and afterwards Duc de Bercy. Also she had heard how Philip, just before he became the Duc de Bercy, had fought his ship against a French vessel off Ushant, and, though she had heavier armament than his own, had destroyed her. For this he had been made an admiral. Only the other day her Jean had brought the Gazette de Jersey in which all these things were related, and had spelled them out for her. And now this same Philip d'Avranche with his new name and fame was on his way to defend the Isle of Jersey.

Maitresse Aimable's muddled mind could not get hold of this new Philip. For years she had thought him a monster, and here he was, a great and valiant gentleman to the world. He had done a thing that Jean would

rather have cut off his hand--both hands--than do, and yet here he was, an admiral, a prince, and a sovereign duke, and men like Jean were as dust beneath his feet. The real Philip she knew: he was the man who had spoiled the life of a woman; this other Philip--she could read about him, she could think about him, just as she could think about William and his horse' in Boulay Bay, or the Little Bad Folk of Rocbert; but she could not realise him as a thing of flesh and blood and actual being. The more she tried to realise him the more mixed she became.

As in her mental maze she sat panting her way to enlightenment, she saw Guida's boat entering the little harbour. Now the truth must be told--but how?

After her first exclamation of welcome to mother and child, Maitresse Aimable struggled painfully for her voice. She tried to find words in which to tell Guida the truth, but, stopping in despair, she suddenly began rocking the child back and forth, saying only: "Prince Admiral he --and now to come! O my good--O my good!" Guida's sharp intuition found the truth.

"Philip d'Avranche!" she said to herself. Then aloud, in a shaking voice--"Philip d'Avranche!"

She could not think clearly for a moment. It was as if her brain had received a blow, and in her head was a singing numbness, obscuring eyesight, hearing, speech.

When she had recovered a little she took the child from Maitresse Aimable, and pressing him to her bosom placed him in the Sieur de Mauprat's great arm-chair. This action, ordinary as it seemed, was significant of what was in her mind. The child himself realised something unusual, and he sat perfectly still, two small hands spread out on the big arms.

"You always believed in me, 'tresse Aimable," Guida said at last in a low voice.

"Oui-gia, what else?" was the instant reply. The quick responsiveness of her own voice seemed to confound the Femme de Ballast, and her face suffused.

Guida stooped quickly and kissed her on the cheek. "You'll never regret that. And you will have to go on believing still, but you'll not be sorry in the end, 'tresse Aimable," she said, and turned away to the fireplace. An hour afterwards Maitresse Aimable was upon her way to St. Heliers, but now she carried her weight more easily and panted less. Twice within the last month Jean had given her ear a friendly pinch, and now Guida had kissed her--surely she had reason to carry her weight more lightly.

That afternoon and evening Guida struggled with herself: the woman in her shrinking from the ordeal at hand. But the mother in her pleaded, commanded, ruled confused emotions to quiet. Finality of purpose once

determined, a kind of peace came over her sick spirit, for with finality there is quiescence if not peace.

When she looked at the little Guilbert, refined and strong, curiously observant, and sensitive in temperament like herself, her courage suddenly leaped to a higher point than it had ever known. This innocent had suffered enough. What belonged to him he had not had. He had been wronged in much by his father, and maybe--and this was the cruel part of it--had been unwittingly wronged, alas! how unwilling, by her! If she gave her own life many times, it still could be no more than was the child's due.

A sudden impulse seized her, and with a quick explosion of feeling she dropped on her knees, and looking into his eyes, as though hungering for the words she so often yearned to hear, she said:

"You love your mother, Guilbert? You love her, little son?"

With a pretty smile and eyes brimming with affectionate fun, but without a word, the child put out a tiny hand and drew the fingers softly down his mother's face.

"Speak, little son, tell your mother that you love her." The tiny hand pressed itself over her eyes, and a gay little laugh came from the sensitive lips, then both arms ran round her neck. The child drew her head to him impulsively, and kissing her, a little upon the hair and a little upon the forehead, so indefinite was the embrace, he said:

"Si, maman, I loves you best of all," then added: "Maman, can't I have the sword now?"

"You shall have the sword too some day," she answered, her eyes flashing.

"But, maman, can't I touch it now?"

Without a word she took down the sheathed goldhandled sword and laid it across the chair-arms.

"I can't take the sword out, can I, maman?" he asked.

She could not help smiling. "Not yet, my son, not yet."

"I has to be growed up so the blade doesn't hurt me, hasn't I, maman?"

She nodded and smiled again, and went about her work.

He nodded sagely. "Maman--" he said. She turned to him; the little figure was erect with a sweet importance. "Maman, what am I now--with the sword?" he asked, with wide-open, amazed eyes.

A strange look passed across her face. Stooping, she kissed his curly hair.

"You are my prince," she said.

A little later the two were standing on that point of land called Grosnez--the brow of the Jersey tiger. Not far from them was a signal-staff which telegraphed to another signal-staff inland. Upon the staff now was hoisted a red flag. Guida knew the signals well. The red flag meant warships in sight. Then bags were hoisted that told of the number of vessels: one, two, three, four, five, six, then one next the upright, meaning seven. Last of all came the signal that a flag-ship was among them.

This was a fleet in command of an admiral. There, not far out, between Guernsey and Jersey, was the squadron itself. Guida watched it for a long while, her heart hardening; but seeing that the men by the signal-staff were watching her, she took the child and went to a spot where they were shielded from any eyes. Here she watched the fleet draw nearer and nearer.

The vessels passed almost within a stone's throw of her. She could see the St. George's Cross flying at the fore of the largest ship. That was the admiral's flag--that was the flag of Admiral Prince Philip d'Avranche, Duc de Bercy.

She felt her heart stand still suddenly, and with a tremor, as of fear, she gathered her child close to her. "What is all those ships, maman?" asked the child. "They are ships to defend Jersey," she said, watching the Imperturbable and its flotilla range on.

"Will they offend us, maman?"

"Perhaps-at the last," she said.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Off Grouville Bay lay the squadron of the Jersey station. The St. George's Cross was flying at the fore of the Imperturbable, and on every ship of the fleet the white ensign flapped in the morning wind. The wooden-walled three-decked flag-ship, with her 32-pounders, and six hundred men, was not less picturesque and was more important than the Castle of Mont Orgueil near by, standing over two hundred feet above the level of the sea: the home of Philip d'Avranche, Duc de Bercy, and the Comtesse Chantavoine, now known to the world as the Duchesse de Bercy.

The Comtesse had arrived in the island almost simultaneously with Philip, although he had urged her to remain at the ducal palace of Bercy. But the duchy of Bercy was in hard case. When the imbecile Duke Leopold John died and Philip succeeded, the neutrality of Bercy had been proclaimed, but this neutrality had since been violated, and there was danger at once from the incursions of the Austrians and the ravages of the French troops. In Philip's absence the valiant governor-general of the duchy,

aided by the influence and courage of the Comtesse Chantavoine, had thus far saved it from dismemberment, in spite of attempted betrayals by Damour the Intendant, who still remained Philip's enemy.

But when the Marquis Grandjon-Larisse, the uncle of the Comtesse, died, her cousin, General Grandjon-Larisse of the Republican army--whose word with Dalbarade had secured Philip's release years before for her own safety, first urged and then commanded her temporary absence from the duchy. So far he had been able to protect it from the fury of the Republicans and the secret treachery of the Jacobins. But a time of great peril was now at hand. Under these anxieties and the lack of other inspiration than duty, her health had failed, and at last she obeyed her cousin, joining Philip at the Castle of Mont Orgueil.

More than a year had passed since she had seen him, but there was no emotion, no ardour in their present greeting. From the first there had been nothing to link them together. She had married, hoping that she might love thereafter; he in choler and bitterness, and in the stress of a desperate ambition. He had avoided the marriage so long as he might, in hope of preventing it until the Duke should die, but with the irony of fate the expected death had come two hours after the ceremony. Then, shortly afterwards, came the death of the imbecile Leopold John; and Philip found himself the Duc de Bercy, and within a year, by reason of a splendid victory for the Imperturbable, an admiral.

Truth to tell, in this battle he had fought for victory for his ship and a fall for himself: for the fruit he had plucked was turning to dust and ashes. He was haunted by the memory of a wronged woman, as she herself had foretold. Death, with the burial of private dishonour under the roses of public victory--that had come to be his desire. But he had found that Death is wilful and chooseth her own time; that she may be lured, but she will not come with shouting. So he had stoically accepted his fate, and could even smile with a bitter cynicism when ordered to proceed to the coast of Jersey, where collision with a French squadron was deemed certain.

Now, he was again brought face to face with his past; with the imminent memory of Guida Landresse de Landresse. Where was Guida now? What had happened to her? He dared not ask, and none told him. Whichever way he turned--night or day--her face haunted him. Looking out from the windows of Mont Orgueil Castle, or from the deck of the Imperturbable, he could see--and he could scarce choose but see--the lonely Ecrehos. There, with a wild eloquence, he had made a girl believe he loved her, and had taken the first step in the path which should have led to true happiness and honour. From this good path he had violently swerved--and now?

From all that could be seen, however, the world went very well with him. He was the centre of authority. Almost any morning one might have seen a boat shoot out from below the Castle wall, carrying a flag with the blue ball of a Vice-Admiral of the White in the canton, and as the Admiral himself stepped upon the deck of the Imperturbable between saluting guards, across the water came a gay march played in his honour.

Jersey herself was elate, eager to welcome one of her own sons risen to such high estate. When, the very day after his arrival, he passed through the Vier Marchi on his way to visit the Lieutenant-Governor, the redrobed jurats impulsively turned out to greet him. They were ready to prove that memory is a matter of will and cultivation. There is no curtain so opaque as that which drops between the mind of man and the thing it is advantageous to forget. But how closely does the ear of self-service listen for the footfall of a most distant memory, when to do so is to share even a reflected glory!

A week had gone since Philip had landed on the island. Memories pursued him. If he came by the shore of St. Clement's Bay, he saw the spot where he had stood with her the evening he married her, and she said to him: "Philip, I wonder what we will think of this day a year from now!..... To-day is everything to you, but to-morrow is very much to me." He remembered Shoreham sitting upon the cromlech above singing the legend of the gui-l'annee--and Shoreham was lying now a hundred fathoms deep.

As he walked through the Vier Marchi with his officers, there flashed before his eyes the scene of sixteen years ago, when, through the grime and havoc of battle, he had run to save Guida from the scimitar of the garish Turk. Walking through the Place du Vier Prison, he recalled the morning when he had rescued Ranulph from the hands of the mob. Where was Ranulph now?

If he had but known it, that very morning as he passed Mattingley's house Ranulph had looked down at him with infinite scorn and loathing--but with triumph too, for the Chevalier had just shown him a certain page in a certain parish-register long lost, left with him by Carterette Mattingley. Philip knew naught of Ranulph save the story babbled by the islanders. He cared to hear of no one but Guida, and who was now to mention her name to him? It was long--so long since he had seen her face. How many years ago was it? Only five, and yet it seemed twenty.

He was a boy then; now his hair was streaked with grey. He was light-hearted then, and he was still buoyant with his fellows, still alert and vigorous, quick of speech and keen of humour--but only before the world. In his own home he was fitful of mood, impatient of the grave, meditative look of his wife, of her resolute tenacity of thought and purpose, of her unvarying evenness of mood, through which no warmth played. It seemed to him that if she had defied him--given him petulance for petulance, impatience for impatience, it would have been easier to bear. If--if he could only read behind those passionless eyes, that clear, un wrinkled forehead! But he knew her no better now than he did the day he married her. Unwittingly she chilled him, and he felt he had no right to complain, for he had done her the greatest wrong which can be done a woman. Whatever chanced, Guida was still his wife; and there was in him yet the strain of Calvinistic morality of the island race that bred him. He had shrunk from coming here, but it had been far worse than he had looked for.

One day, in a nervous, bitter moment, after an impatient hour with the Comtesse, he had said: "Can you--can you not speak? Can you not tell me

what you think?" She had answered quietly:

"It would do no good. You would not understand. I know you in some ways better than you know yourself. I cannot tell what it is, but there is something wrong in your nature, something that poisons your life. And not myself only has felt that. I never told you--but you remember the day the old Duke died, the day we were married? You had gone from the room a moment. The Duke beckoned me to him, and whispered 'Don't be afraid--don't be afraid--' and then he died. That meant that he was afraid, that death had cleared his sight as to you in some way. He was afraid--of what? And I have been afraid--of what? I do not know. Things have not gone well somehow. You are strong, you are brave, and I come of a family that have been strong and brave. We ought to be near: yet, yet we are lonely and far apart, and we shall never be nearer or less lonely. That I know."

To this he had made no reply and this anger vanished. Something in her words had ruled him to her own calmness, and at that moment he had the first flash of understanding of her nature and its true relation to his own.

Passing through the Rue d'Egypte this day he met Dormy Jamais. Forgetful of everything save that this quaint foolish figure had interested him when a boy, he called him by name; but Dormy Jamais swerved away, eyeing him askance.

At that instant he saw Jean Touzel standing in the doorway of his house. A wave of remorseful feeling rushed over him. He could wait no longer: he would ask Jean Touzel and his wife about Guida. He instantly bethought him of an excuse for the visit. His squadron needed another pilot; he would approach Jean in the matter.

Bidding his flag-lieutenant go on to Elizabeth Castle whither they were bound, and await him there, he crossed over to Jean. By the time he reached the doorway, however, Jean had retreated to the veille by the chimney behind Maitresse Aimable, who sat in a great stave-chair mending a net.

Philip knocked and stepped inside. When Maitresse Aimable saw who it was she was so startled that she dropped her work, and made vague clutches to recover it. Stooping, however, was a great effort for her. Philip instantly stepped forward and picked up the net. Politely handing it to her, he said:

"Ah, Maitresse Aimable, it is as if you had never stirred all these years!" Then turning to her husband "I have come looking for a good pilot, Jean." Maitresse Aimable had at first flushed to a purple, had afterwards gone pale, then recovered herself, and now returned Philip's look with a downright steadiness. Like Jean, she knew well enough he had not come for a pilot--that was not the business of a Prince Admiral.

She did not even rise. Philip might be whatever the world chose to call him, but her house was her own, and he had come uninvited, and he was

unwelcome.

She kept her seat, but her fat head inclined once in greeting, and she waited for him to speak again. She knew why he had come; and somehow the steady look in these slow, brown eyes, and the blinking glance behind Jean's brass-rimmed spectacles, disconcerted Philip. Here were people who knew the truth about him, knew the sort of man he really was. These poor folk who had had nothing of the world but what they earned, they would never hang on any prince's favours.

He read the situation rightly. The penalties of his life were teaching him a discernment which could never have come to him through good fortune alone. Having at last discovered his real self a little, he was in the way of knowing others.

"May I shut the door?" he asked quietly. Jean nodded. Closing it he turned to them again. "Since my return I have heard naught concerning Mademoiselle Landresse," he said. "I want to ask you about her now. Does she still live in the Place du Vier Prison?"

Both Jean and Aimable shook their heads. They had spoken no word since his entrance.

"She--she is not dead?" he asked. They shook their heads again.

"Her grandfather"--he paused--"is he living?" Once more they shook their heads in negation. "Where is mademoiselle?" he asked, sick at heart.

Jean looked at his wife; neither moved nor answered. "Where does she live?" urged Philip. Still there was no motion, no reply. "You might as well tell me." His tone was half pleading, half angry--little like a sovereign duke, very like a man in trouble. "You must know I shall find out from some one else, then," he continued. "But it is better for you to tell me. I mean her no harm, and I would rather know about her from her friends."

He took off his hat now. Something in the dignity of these two honest folk rebuked the pride of place and spirit in him. As plainly as though heralds had proclaimed it, he understood that these two knew the abatements on the shield of his honour--argent, a plain point tenne, due to him "that tells lyes to his Prince or General," and argent, a gore sinister tenne, due for flying from his colours.

Maitresse Aimable turned and looked towards Jean, but Jean turned away his head. Then she did not hesitate. The voice so oft eluding her will responded readily now. Anger--plain primitive rage--possessed her. She had had no child, but as the years had passed all the love that might have been given to her own was bestowed upon Guida, and in that mind she spoke.

"O my grief, to think you have come here--you!" she burst forth. "You steal the best heart in the world--there is none like her, nannin-gia. You promise her, you break her life, you spoil her, and then you fly away

--ah coward you! Man pethe benin, was there ever such a man like you! If my Jean there had done a thing as that I would sink him in the sea-- he would sink himself, je me crais! But you come back here, O my Mother of God, you come back here with your sword, with your crown--ugh, it is like a black cat in heaven--you!"

She got to her feet more nimbly than she had ever done in her life, and the floor seemed to heave as she came towards Philip. "You speak to me with soft words," she said harshly--"but you shall have the good hard truth from me. You want to know now where she is--I ask where you have been these five years? Your voice it tremble when you speak of her now. Oh ho! it has been nice and quiet these five years. The grand pethe of her drop dead in his chair when he know. The world turn against her, make light of her, when they know. All alone--she is all alone, but for one fat old fool like me. She bear all the shame, all the pain, for the crime of you. All alone she take her child and go on to the rock of Plemont to live these five years. But you, you go and get a crown and be Amiral and marry a grande comtesse--marry, oh, je crais ben! This is no world for such men like you. You come to my house, to the house of Jean Touzel, to ask this and that--well, you have the truth of God, ba su! No good will come to you in the end, nannin-gia! When you go to die, you will think and think and think of that beautiful Guida Landresse; you will think and think of the heart you kill, and you will call, and she will not come. You will call till your throat rattle, but she will not come, and the child of sorrow you give her will not come--no, bidemme! E'fin, the door you shut you can open now, and you can go from the house of Jean Touzel. It belong to the wife of an honest man--maint'nant!"

In the moment's silence that ensued, Jean took a step forward.

"Ma femme, ma bonne femme!" he said with a shaking voice. Then he pointed to the door. Humiliated, overwhelmed by the words of the woman, Philip turned mechanically towards the door without a word, and his fingers fumbled for the latch, for a mist was before his eyes. With a great effort he recovered himself, and passed slowly out into the Rue d'Egypte.

"A child--a child!" he said brokenly. "Guida's child--my God! And I --have never--known. Plemont--Plemont, she is at Plemont!" He shuddered. "Guida's child--and mine," he kept saying to himself, as in a painful dream he passed on to the shore.

In the little fisherman's cottage he had left, a fat old woman sat sobbing in the great chair made of barrel-staves, and a man, stooping, kissed her twice on the cheek--the first time in fifteen years. And then she both laughed and cried.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Guida sat by the fire sewing, Biribi the dog at her feet. A little

distance away, to the right of the chimney, lay Guilbert asleep. Twice she lowered the work to her lap to look at the child, the reflected light of the fire playing on his face. Stretching out her hand, she touched him, and then she smiled. Hers was an all-devouring love; the child was her whole life; her own present or future was as nothing; she was but fuel for the fire of his existence.

A storm was raging outside. The sea roared in upon Plemont and Grosnez, battering the rocks in futile agony. A hoarse nor'-easter ranged across the tiger's head in helpless fury: a night of awe to inland folk, and of danger to seafarers. To Guida, who was both of the sea and of the land, fearless as to either, it was neither terrible nor desolate to be alone with the storm. Storm was but power unshackled, and power she loved and understood. She had lived so long in close commerce with storm and sea that something of their keen force had entered into her, and she was kin with them. Each wind to her was intimate as a friend, each rock and cave familiar as her hearthstone; and the ungoverned ocean spoke in terms intelligible. So heavy was the surf that now and then the spray of some foiled wave broke on the roof, but she only nodded at that, as though the sea were calling her to come forth, tapping on her roof-tree in joyous greeting.

But suddenly she started and bent her head. It seemed as if her whole body were hearkening. Now she rose quickly to her feet, dropped her work upon the table near by, and rested herself against it, still listening. She was sure she heard a horse's hoofs. Turning swiftly, she drew the curtain of the bed before her sleeping child, and then stood quiet waiting--waiting. Her hand went to her heart once as though its fierce throbbing hurt her. Plainly as though she could look through these stone walls into clear sunlight, she saw some one dismount, and she heard a voice.

The door of the but was unlocked and unbarred. If she feared, it was easy to shoot the bolt and lock the door, to drop the bar across the little window, and be safe and secure. But no bodily fear possessed her--only that terror of the spirit when its great trial comes suddenly and it shrinks back, though the mind be of faultless courage.

She waited. There came a knocking at the door. She did not move from where she stood.

"Come in," she said. She was composed and resolute now.

The latch clicked, the door opened, and a cloaked figure entered, the shriek of the storm behind. The door closed again. The intruder took a step forward, his hat came off, the cloak was loosed and dropped upon the floor. Guida's premonition had been right: It was Philip.

She did not speak. A stone could have been no colder as she stood in the light of the fire, her face still and strong, the eyes darkling, luminous. There was on her the dignity of the fearless, the pure in heart.

"Guida!" Philip said, and took a step nearer, and paused.

He was haggard, he had the look of one who had come upon a desperate errand. When she did not answer he said pleadingly:

"Guida, won't you speak to me?"

"The Duc de Bercy chooses a strange hour for his visit," she said quietly.

"But see," he answered hurriedly; "what I have to say to you--" he paused, as though to choose the thing he should say first.

"You can say nothing I need hear," she answered, looking him steadily in the eyes.

"Ah, Guida," he cried, disconcerted by her cold composure, "for God's sake listen to me! To-night we have to face our fate. To-night you have to say--"

"Fate was faced long ago. I have nothing to say."

"Guida, I have repented of all. I have come now only to speak honestly of the wrong I did you. I have come to--"

Scorn sharpened her words, though she spoke calmly: "You have forced yourself upon a woman's presence--and at this hour!"

"I chose the only hour possible," he answered quickly. "Guida, the past cannot be changed, but we have the present and the future still. I have not come to justify myself, but to find a way to atone."

"No atonement is possible."

"You cannot deny me the right to confess to you that--"

"To you denial should not seem hard usage," she answered slowly, "and confession should have witnesses--"

She paused suggestively. The imputation that he of all men had the least right to resent denial; that, dishonest still, he was willing to justify her privately though not publicly; that repentance should have been open to the world--it all stung him.

He threw out his hands in a gesture of protest. "As many witnesses as you will, but not now, not this hour, after all these years. Will you not at least listen to me, and then judge and act? Will you not hear me, Guida?"

She had not yet even stirred. Now that it had come, this scene was all so different from what she might have imagined. But she spoke out of a merciless understanding, an unchangeable honesty. Her words came clear and pitiless:

"If you will speak to the point and without a useless emotion, I will try to listen. Common kindness should have prevented this intrusion--by you!"

Every word she said was like a whip-lash across his face. A devilish light leapt into his eye, but it faded as quickly as it came.

"After to-night, to the public what you will," he repeated with dogged persistence, "but it was right we should speak alone to each other at least this once before the open end. I did you wrong, yet I did not mean to ruin your life, and you should know that. I ought not to have married you secretly; I acknowledge that. But I loved you--"

She shook her head, and with a smile of pitying disdain--he could so little see the real truth, his real misdemeanour--she said: "Oh no, never--never! You were not capable of love; you never knew what it means. From the first you were too untrue ever to love a woman. There was a great fire of emotion, you saw shadows on the wall, and you fell in love with them. That was all."

"I tell you that I loved you," he answered with passionate energy. "But as you will. Let it be that it was not real love: at least it was all there was in me to give. I never meant to desert you. I never meant to disavow our marriage. I denied you, you will say. I did. In the light of what came after, it was dishonourable--I grant that; but I did it at a crisis and for the fulfilment of a great ambition--and as much for you as for me."

"That was the least of your evil work. But how little you know what true people think or feel!" she answered with a kind of pain in her voice, for she felt that such a nature could never even realise its own enormities. Well, since it had gone so far she would speak openly, though it hurt her sense of self-respect.

"For that matter, do you think that I or any good woman would have had place or power, been princess or duchess, at the price? What sort of mind have you?" She looked him straight in the eyes. "Put it in the clear light of right and wrong, it was knavery. You--you talk of not meaning to do me harm. You were never capable of doing me good. It was not in you. From first to last you are untrue. Were it otherwise, were you not from first to last unworthy, would you have--but no, your worst crime need not be judged here. Yet had you one spark of worthiness would you have made a mock marriage--it is no more--with the Comtesse Chantavoine? No matter what I said or what I did in anger, or contempt of you, had you been an honest man you would not have so ruined another life. Marriage, alas! You have wronged the Comtesse worse than you have wronged me. One day I shall be righted, but what can you say or do to right her wrongs?"

Her voice had now a piercing indignation and force. "Yes, Philip d'Avranche, it is as I say, justice will come to me. The world turned against me because of you; I have been shamed and disgraced. For years

I have suffered in silence. But I have waited without fear for the end. God is with me. He is stronger than fortune or fate. He has brought you to Jersey once more, to right my wrongs, mine and my child's."

She saw his eyes flash to the little curtained bed. They both stood silent and still. He could hear the child breathing. His blood quickened. An impulse seized him. He took a step towards the bed, as though to draw the curtain, but she quickly moved between.

"Never," she said in a low stern tone; "no touch of yours for my Guilbert--for my son! Every minute of his life has been mine. He is mine--all mine--and so he shall remain. You who gambled with the name, the fame, the very soul of your wife, you shall not have one breath of her child's life."

It was as if the outward action of life was suspended in them for a moment, and then came the battle of two strong spirits: the struggle of fretful and indulged egotism, the impulse of a vigorous temperament, against a deep moral force, a high purity of mind and conscience, and the invincible love of the mother for the child. Time, bitterness, and power had hardened Philip's mind, and his long-restrained emotions, breaking loose now, made him a passionate and wilful figure. His force lay in the very unruliness of his spirit, hers in the perfect command of her moods and emotions. Well equipped by the thoughts and sufferings of five long years, her spirit was trained to meet this onset with fiery wisdom. They were like two armies watching each other across a narrow stream, between one conflict and another.

For a minute they stood at gaze. The only sounds in the room were the whirring of the fire in the chimney and the child's breathing. At last Philip's intemperate self-will gave way. There was no withstanding that cold, still face, that unwavering eye. Only brutality could go further. The nobility of her nature, her inflexible straight-forwardness came upon him with overwhelming force. Dressed in molleton, with no adornment save the glow of a perfect health, she seemed at this moment, as on the Ecrehos, the one being on earth worth living and caring for. What had he got for all the wrong he had done her? Nothing. Come what might, there was one thing that he could yet do, and even as the thought possessed him he spoke.

"Guida," he said with rushing emotion, "it is not too late. Forgive the past--the wrong of it, the shame of it. You are my wife; nothing can undo that. The other woman--she is nothing to me. If we part and never meet again she will suffer no more than she suffers to go on with me. She has never loved me, nor I her. Ambition did it all, and of ambition God knows I have had enough! Let me proclaim our marriage, let me come back to you. Then, happen what will, for the rest of our lives I will try to atone for the wrong I did you. I want you, I want our child. I want to win your love again. I can't wipe out what I have done, but I can put you right before the world, I can prove to you that I set you above place and ambition. If you shrink from doing it for me, do it"--he glanced towards the bed--"do it for our child. To-morrow--to-morrow it shall be, if you will forgive. To-morrow let us start again--Guida--Guida!"

She did not answer at once; but at last she said "Giving up place and ambition would prove nothing now. It is easy to repent when our pleasures have palled. I told you in a letter four years ago that your protests came too late. They are always too late. With a nature like yours nothing is sure or lasting. Everything changes with the mood. It is different with me: I speak only what I truly mean. Believe me, for I tell you the truth, you are a man that a woman could forget but could never forgive. As a prince you are much better than as a plain man, for princes may do what other men may not. It is their way to take all and give nothing. You should have been born a prince, then all your actions would have seemed natural. Yet now you must remain a prince, for what you got at such a price to others you must pay for. You say you would come down from your high place, you would give up your worldly honours, for me. What madness! You are not the kind of man with whom a woman could trust herself in the troubles and changes of life. Laying all else aside, if I would have had naught of your honours and your duchy long ago, do you think I would now share a disgrace from which you could never rise? For in my heart I feel that this remorse is but caprice. It is to-day; it may not--will not--be tomorrow."

"You are wrong, you are wrong. I am honest with you now," he broke in.

"No," she answered coldly, "it is not in you to be honest. Your words have no ring of truth in my ears, for the note is the same as I heard once upon the Ecrehos. I was a young girl then and I believed; I am a woman now, and I should still disbelieve though all the world were on your side to declare me wrong. I tell you"--her voice rose again, it seemed to catch the note of freedom and strength of the storm without--"I tell you, I will still live as my heart and conscience prompt me. The course I have set for myself I will follow; the life I entered upon when my child was born I will not leave. No word you have said has made my heart beat faster. You and I can never have anything to say to each other in this life, beyond"--her voice changed, she paused--"beyond one thing--"

Going to the bed where the child lay, she drew the curtain softly, and pointing, she said:

"There is my child. I have set my life to the one task, to keep him to myself, and yet to win for him the heritage of the dukedom of Bercy. You shall yet pay to him the price of your wrong-doing."

She drew back slightly so that he could see the child lying with its rosy face half buried in its pillow, the little hand lying like a flower upon the coverlet.

Once more with a passionate exclamation he moved nearer to the child.

"No farther!" she said, stepping before him.

When she saw the wild impulse in his face to thrust her aside, she added: "It is only the shameless coward that strikes the dead. You had a wife--"

Guida d'Avranche, but Guida d'Avranche is dead. There only lives the mother of this child, Guida Landresse de Landresse."

She looked at him with scorn, almost with hatred. Had he touched her-- but she would rather pity than loathe!

Her words roused all the devilry in him. The face of the child had sent him mad.

"By Heaven, I will have the child--I will have the child!" he broke out harshly. "You shall not treat me like a dog. You know well I would have kept you as my wife, but your narrow pride, your unjust anger threw me over. You have wronged me. I tell you you have wronged me, for you held the secret of the child from me all these years."

"The whole world knew!" she exclaimed indignantly. "I will break your pride," he said, incensed and unable to command himself. "Mark you, I will break your pride. And I will have my child too!"

"Establish to the world your right to him," she answered keenly. "You have the right to acknowledge him, but the possession shall be mine."

He was the picture of impotent anger and despair. It was the irony of penalty that the one person in the world who could really sting him was this unacknowledged, almost unknown woman. She was the only human being that had power to shatter his egotism and resolve him into the common elements of a base manhood. Of little avail his eloquence now! He had cajoled a sovereign dukedom out of an aged and fatuous prince; he had cajoled a wife, who yet was no wife, from among the highest of a royal court; he had cajoled success from Fate by a valour informed with vanity and ambition; years ago, with eloquent arts he had cajoled a young girl into a secret marriage--but he could no longer cajole the woman who was his one true wife. She knew him through and through.

He was so wild with rage he could almost have killed her as she stood there, one hand stretched out to protect the child, the other pointing to the door.

He seized his hat and cloak and laid his hand upon the latch, then suddenly turned to her. A dark project came to him. He himself could not prevail with her; but he would reach her yet, through the child. If the child were in his hands, she would come to him.

"Remember, I will have the child," he said, his face black with evil purpose.

She did not deign reply, but stood fearless and still, as, throwing open the door, he rushed out into the night. She listened until she heard his horse's hoofs upon the rocky upland. Then she went to the door, locked it, and barred it. Turning, she ran with a cry as of hungry love to the little bed. Crushing the child to her bosom, she buried her face in his brown curls.

"My son, my own, own son!" she said.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

If at times it would seem that Nature's disposition of the events of a life or a series of lives is illogical, at others she would seem to play them with an irresistible logic--loosing them, as it were, in a trackless forest of experience, and in some dramatic hour, by an inevitable attraction, drawing them back again to a destiny fulfilled. In this latter way did she seem to lay her hand upon the lives of Philip d'Avranche and Guida Landresse.

At the time that Elie Mattingley, in Jersey, was awaiting hanging on the Mont es Pendus, and writing his letter to Carterette concerning the stolen book of church records, in a town of Brittany the Reverend Lorenzo Dow lay dying. The army of the Vendee, under Detricand Comte de Tournay, had made a last dash at a small town held by a section of the Republican army, and captured it. On the prisons being opened, Detricand had discovered in a vile dungeon the sometime curate of St. Michael's Church in Jersey. When they entered on him, wasted and ragged he lay asleep on his bed of rotten straw, his fingers between the leaves of a book of meditations. Captured five years before and forgotten alike by the English and French Governments, he had apathetically pined and starved to these last days of his life.

Recognising him, Detricand carried him in his strong arms to his own tent. For many hours the helpless man lay insensible, but at last the flickering spirit struggled back to light for a little space. When first conscious of his surroundings, the poor captive felt tremblingly in the pocket of his tattered vest. Not finding what he searched for, he half started up. Detricand hastened forward with a black leather-covered book in his hand. Mr. Dow's thin trembling fingers clutched eagerly--it was his only passion--at this journal of his life. As his grasp closed on it, he recognised Detricand, and at the same time he saw the cross and heart of the Vendee on his coat.

A victorious little laugh struggled in his throat. "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously--I could drink some wine, monsieur," he added in the same quaint clerical monotone.

Having drunk the wine he lay back murmuring thanks and satisfaction, his eyes closed. Presently they opened. He nodded at Detricand.

"I have not tasted wine these five years," he said; then added, "You--you took too much wine in Jersey, did you not, monsieur? I used to say an office for you every Litany day, which was of a Friday."

His eyes again caught the cross and heart on Detricand's coat, and they lighted up a little. "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously," he repeated, and added irrelevantly, "I suppose you are almost a captain now?"

"A general--almost," said Detricand with gentle humour.

At that moment an orderly appeared at the tent-door, bearing a letter for Detricand.

"From General Grandjon-Larisse of the Republican army, your highness," said the orderly, handing the letter. "The messenger awaits an answer."

As Detricand hastily read, a look of astonishment crossed over his face, and his brows gathered in perplexity. After a minute's silence he said to the orderly:

"I will send a reply to-morrow."

"Yes, your highness." The orderly saluted and retired.

Mr. Dow half raised himself on his couch, and the fevered eyes swallowed Detricand.

"You--you are a prince, monsieur?" he said. Detricand glanced up from the letter he was reading again, a grave and troubled look on his face.

"Prince of Vaufontaine they call me, but, as you know, I am only a vagabond turned soldier," he said. The dying man smiled to himself,-- a smile of the sweetest vanity this side of death,--for it seemed to him that the Lord had granted him this brand from the burning, and in supreme satisfaction, he whispered: "I used to say an office for you every Litany--which was a Friday, and twice, I remember, on two Saints' days."

Suddenly another thought came to him, and his lips moved--he was murmuring to himself. He would leave a goodly legacy to the captive of his prayers.

Taking the leather-covered journal of his life in both hands, he held it out.

"Highness, highness--" said he. Death was breaking the voice in his throat.

Detricand stooped and ran an arm round his shoulder, but raising himself up Mr. Dow gently pushed him back. The strength of his supreme hour was on him.

"Highness," said he, "I give you the book of five years of my life--not of its every day, but of its moments, its great days. Read it," he added, "read it wisely. Your own name is in it--with the first time I said an office for you." His breath failed him, he fell back, and lay quiet for several minutes.

"You used to take too much wine," he said half wildly, starting up again.

"Permit me your hand, highness."

Detricand dropped on his knee and took the wasted hand. Mr. Dow's eyes were glazing fast. With a last effort he spoke--his voice like a squeaking wind in a pipe:

"The Lord hath triumphed gloriously--" and he leaned forward to kiss Detricand's hand.

But Death intervened, and his lips fell instead upon the red cross on Detricand's breast, as he sank forward lifeless.

That night, after Lorenzo Dow was laid in his grave, Detricand read the little black leather-covered journal bequeathed to him. Of the years of his captivity the records were few; the book was chiefly concerned with his career in Jersey. Detricand read page after page, more often with a smile than not; yet it was the smile of one who knew life and would scarce misunderstand the eccentric and honest soul of the Reverend Lorenzo Dow.

Suddenly, however, he started, for he came upon these lines:

I have, in great privacy and with halting of spirit, married, this twenty-third of January, Mr. Philip d'Avranche of His Majesty's ship "Narcissus," and Mistress Guida Landresse de Landresse, both of this Island of Jersey; by special license of the Bishop of Winchester.

To this was added in comment:

Unchurchmanlike, and most irregular. But the young gentleman's tongue is gifted, and he pressed his cause heartily. Also Mr. Shoreham of the Narcissus--"Mad Shoreham of Galway" his father was called--I knew him--added his voice to the request also. Troubled in conscience thereby, yet I did marry the twain gladly, for I think a worthier maid never lived than this same Mistress Guida Landresse de Landresse, of the ancient family of the de Mauprats. Yet I like not secrecy, though it be but for a month or two months--on my vow, I like it not for one hour.

Note: At leisure read of the family history of the de Mauprats and the d'Avranches.

N.: No more secret marriages nor special licenses--most uncanonical privileges!

N.: For ease of conscience write to His Grace at Lambeth upon the point.

Detricand sprang to his feet. So this was the truth about Philip d'Avranche, about Guida, alas!

He paced the tent, his brain in a whirl. Stopping at last, he took from his pocket the letter received that afternoon from General Grandjon-Larisse, and read it through again hurriedly. It proposed a truce, and a meeting with himself at a village near, for conference upon the surrender

of Detricand's small army.

"A bitter end to all our fighting," said Detricand aloud at last. "But he is right. It is now a mere waste of life. I know my course. . . . Even to-night," he added, "it shall be to-night."

Two hours later Detricand, Prince of Vaufontaine, was closeted with General Grandjon-Larisse at a village half-way between the Republican army and the broken bands of the Vendee.

As lads Detricand and Grandjon-Larisse had known each other well. But since the war began Grandjon-Larisse had gone one way, and he had gone the other, bitter enemies in principle but friendly enough at heart.

They had not seen each other since the year before Rullecour's invasion of Jersey.

"I had hoped to see you by sunset, monseigneur," said Grandjon-Larisse after they had exchanged greetings.

"It is through a melancholy chance you see me at all," replied Detricand heavily.

"To what piteous accident am I indebted?" Grandjon-Larisse replied in an acid tone, for war had given his temper an edge. "Were not my reasons for surrender sound? I eschewed eloquence--I gave you facts."

Detricand shook his head, but did not reply at once. His brow was clouded.

"Let me speak fully and bluntly now," Grandjon-Larisse went on. "You will not shrink from plain truths, I know. We were friends ere you went adventuring with Rullecour. We are soldiers too; and you will understand I meant no bragging in my letter."

He raised his brows inquiringly, and Detricand inclined his head in assent.

Without more ado, Grandjon-Larisse laid a map on the table. "This will help us," he said briefly, then added: "Look you, Prince, when war began the game was all with you. At Thouars here"--his words followed his finger--"at Fontenay, at Saumur, at Torfou, at Coron, at Chateau-Gonthier, at Pontorson, at Dol, at Antrain, you had us by the heels. Victory was ours once to your thrice. Your blood was up. You had great men--great men," he repeated politely.

Detricand bowed. "But see how all is changed," continued the other. "See: by this forest of Vesins de la Rochejaquelein fell. At Chollet"--his finger touched another point--"Bonchamp died, and here d'Elbee and Lescurre were mortally wounded. At Angers Stofflet was sent to his account, and Charette paid the price at Nantes." He held up his fingers. "One--two--three--four--five--six great men gone!"

He paused, took a step away from the table, and came back again.

Once more he dropped his finger on the map. "Tinteniac is gone, and at Quiberon Peninsula your friend Sombreuil was slain. And look you here," he added in a lower voice, "at Laval my old friend the Prince of Talmont was executed at his own chateau, where I had spent many an hour with him."

Detricand's eyes flashed fire. "Why then permit the murder, monsieur le general?"

Grandjon-Larisse started, his voice became hard at once. "It is not a question of Talmont, or of you, or of me, monseigneur. It is not a question of friendship, not even of father, or brother, or son--but of France."

"And of God and the King," said Detricand quickly.

Grandjon-Larisse shrugged his shoulders. "We see with different eyes. We think with different minds," and he stooped over the map again.

"We feel with different hearts," said Detricand. "There is the difference between us--between your cause and mine. You are all for logic and perfection in government, and to get it you go mad, and France is made a shambles--"

"War is cruelty, and none can make it gentle," interrupted Grandjon-Larisse. He turned to the map once more. "And see, monseigneur, here at La Vie your uncle the Prince of Vaufontaine died, leaving you his name and a burden of hopeless war. Now count them all over--de la Rochejaquelein, Bonchamp, d'Elbee, Lescure, Stofflet, Charette, Talmont, Tinteniac, Sombreuil, Vaufontaine--they are all gone, your great men. And who of chieftains and armies are left? Detricand of Vaufontaine and a few brave men--no more. Believe me, monseigneur, your game is hopeless--by your grace, one moment still," he added, as Detricand made an impatient gesture. "Hoche destroyed your army and subdued the country two years ago. You broke out again, and Hoche and I have beaten you again. Fight on, with your doomed followers--brave men I admit--and Hoche will have no mercy. I can save your peasants if you will yield now.

"We have had enough of blood. Let us have peace. To proceed is certain death to all, and your cause worse lost. On my honour, monseigneur, I do this at some risk, in memory of old days. I have lost too many friends," he added in a lower voice.

Detricand was moved. "I thank you for this honest courtesy. I had almost misread your letter," he answered. "Now I will speak freely. I had hoped to leave my bones in Brittany. It was my will to fight to the last, with my doomed followers as you call them--comrades and lovers of France I say. And it was their wish to die with me. Till this afternoon I had no other purpose. Willing deaths ours, for I am persuaded, for every one of us that dies, a hundred men will rise up

again and take revenge upon this red debauch of government!"

"Have a care," said Grandjon-Larisse with sudden anger, his hand dropping upon the handle of his sword.

"I ask leave for plain beliefs as you asked leave for plain words. I must speak my mind, and I will say now that it has changed in this matter of fighting and surrender. I will tell you what has changed it," and Detricand drew from his pocket Lorenzo Dow's journal. "It concerns both you and me."

Grandjon-Larisse flashed a look of inquiry at him. "It concerns your cousin the Comtesse Chantavoine and Philip d'Avranche, who calls himself her husband and Duc de Bercy."

He opened the journal, and handed it to Grandjon-Larisse. "Read," he said.

As Grandjon-Larisse read, an oath broke from him. "Is this authentic, monseigneur?" he said in blank astonishment "and the woman still lives?"

Detricand told him all he knew, and added:

"A plain duty awaits us both, monsieur le general. You are concerned for the Comtesse Chantavoine; I am concerned for the Duchy of Bercy and for this poor lady--this poor lady in Jersey," he added.

Grandjon-Larisse was white with rage. "The upstart! The English brigand!" he said between his teeth.

"You see now," said Detricand, "that though it was my will to die fighting your army in the last trench--"

"Alone, I fear," interjected Grandjon-Larisse with curt admiration.

"My duty and my purpose go elsewhere," continued Detricand. "They take me to Jersey. And yours, monsieur?"

Grandjon-Larisse beat his foot impatiently on the floor. "For the moment I cannot stir in this, though I would give my life to do so," he answered bitterly. "I am but now recalled to Paris by the Directory."

He stopped short in his restless pacing and held out his hand.

"We are at one," he said--"friends in this at least. Command me when and how you will. Whatever I can I will do, even at risk and peril. The English brigand!" he added bitterly. "But for this insult to my blood, to the noble Chantavoine, he shall pay the price to me--yes, by the heel of God!"

"I hope to be in Jersey three days hence," said Detricand.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

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Kissed her twice on the cheek--the first time in fifteen years
No news--no trouble
War is cruelty, and none can make it gentle

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