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THE MONEY MASTER

By Gilbert Parker

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CHAPTER XIII

THE MAN FROM OUTSIDE

"Oh, who will walk the wood with me,
I fear to walk alone;
So young am I, as you may see;
No dangers have I known.
So young, so small--ah, yes, m'sieu',
I'll walk the wood with you!"

In the last note of the song applause came instantaneously, almost impatiently, as it might seem. With cries of "Encore! Encore!" it lasted some time, while the happy singer looked around with frank pleasure on the little group encircling her in the Manor Cartier.

"Did you like it so much?" she asked in a general way, and not looking at any particular person. A particular person, however, replied, and she had addressed the question to him, although not looking at him. He was the Man from Outside, and he sat near the bright wood-fire; for though it was almost June the night was cool and he was delicate.

"Ah, but splendid, but splendid--it got into every corner of every one of us," the Man from Outside responded, speaking his fluent French with a slight English accent, which had a pleasant piquancy--at least to the ears of the pretty singer, Mdlle. Zoe Barbille. He was a man of about thirty-three, clean-shaven, dark-haired, with an expression of cleverness; yet with an irresponsible something about him which M. Fille had reflected upon with concern. For this slim, eager, talkative, half-invalid visitor to St. Saviour's had of late shown a marked liking for the presence and person of Zoe Barbille; and Zoe was as dear to M. Fille as though she were his own daughter. He it was who, in sarcasm, had spoken of this young stranger as "The Man from Outside."

Ever since Zoe's mother had vanished--alone--seven years before from the Manor Cartier, or rather from his office at Vilray, M. Fille had been as much like a maiden aunt or a very elder brother to the Spanische's

daughter as a man could be. Of M. Fille's influence over his daughter and her love of his companionship, Jean Jacques had no jealousy whatever. Very often indeed, when he felt incompetent to do for his child all that he wished--philosophers are often stupid in human affairs--he thought it was a blessing Zoe had a friend like M. Fille. Since the terrible day when he found that his wife had gone from him--not with the master-carpenter who only made his exit from Laplatte some years afterwards--he had had no desire to have a woman at the Manor to fill her place, even as housekeeper. He had never swerved from that. He had had a hard row to hoe, but he had hoed it with a will not affected by domestic accidents or inconveniences. The one woman from outside whom he permitted to go and come at will--and she did not come often, because she and M. Fille agreed it would be best not to do so--was the sister of the Cure. To be sure there was Seraphe Corniche, the old cook, but she was buried in her kitchen, and Jean Jacques treated her like a man.

When Zoe was confirmed, and had come back from Montreal, having spent two years in a convent there--the only time she had been away from her father in seven years--having had her education chiefly from a Catholic "brother," the situation developed in a new way. Zoe at once became as conspicuous in the country-side as her father had been over so many years. She was fresh, volatile, without affectation or pride, and had a temperament responsive to every phase of life's simple interests. She took the attention of the young men a little bit as her due, but yet without conceit. The gallants had come about her like bees, for there was Jean Jacques' many businesses and his reputation for wealth; and there was her own charm, concerning which there could be far less doubt than about Jean Jacques' magnificent solvency.

Zoe had gone heart-whole and with no especial preference for any young man, until the particular person came, the Man from Outside.

His name was Gerard Fynes, and his business was mumming. He was a young lawyer turned actor, and he had lived in Montreal before he went on the stage. He was English--that was a misfortune; he was an actor--that was a greater misfortune, for it suggested vagabondage of morals as well as of profession; and he was a Protestant, which was the greatest misfortune of all. But he was only at St. Saviour's for his convalescence after a so-called attack of congestion of the lungs; and as he still had a slight cough and looked none too robust, and as, more than all, he was simple in his ways, enjoying the life of the parish with greater zest than the residents, he found popularity. Undoubtedly he had a taking way with him. He was lodging with Louis Charron, a small farmer and kinsman of Jean Jacques, who sold whisky--"white whisky"--without a license. It was a Charron family habit to sell liquor illegally, and Louis pursued the career with all an amateur's enthusiasm. He had a sovereign balm for "colds," composed of camomile flowers, boneset, liquorice, pennyroyal and gentian root, which he sold to all comers; and it was not unnatural that a visitor with weak lungs should lodge with him.

Louis and his wife had only good things to say about Gerard Fynes; for the young man lived their life as though he was born to it. He ate the slap-jacks, the buttermilk-pop, the pork and beans, the Indian corn on

the cob, the pea-soup, and the bread baked in the roadside oven, with a relish which was not all pretence; for indeed he was as primitive as he was subtle. He himself could not have told how much of him was true and how much was make-believe. But he was certainly lovable, and he was not bad by nature. Since coming to St. Saviour's he had been constant to one attraction, and he had not risked his chances with Zoe by response to the shy invitations of dark eyes, young and not so young, which met his own here and there in the parish.

Only M. Fille and Jean Jacques himself had feelings of real antagonism to him. Jean Jacques, though not naturally suspicious, had, however, seen an understanding look pass between his Zoe and this stranger--this Protestant English stranger from the outer world, to which Jean Jacques went less frequently since his fruitless search for his vanished Carmen. The Clerk of the Court saw that Jean Jacques had observed the intimate glances of the two young people, and their eyes met in understanding. It was just before Zoe had sung so charmingly, 'Oh, Who Will Walk the Wood With Me'.

At first after Carmen's going Jean Jacques had found it hard to endure singing in his house. Zoe's trilling was torture to him, though he had never forbidden her to sing, and she had sung on to her heart's content. By a subtle instinct, however, and because of the unspoken sorrow in her own heart, she never sang the songs like 'La Manola'. Never after the day Carmen went did Zoe speak of her mother to anyone at all. It was worse than death; it was annihilation, so far as speech was concerned. The world at large only knew that Carmen Barbille had run away, and that even Sebastian Dolores her father did not know where she was. The old man had not heard from her, and he seldom visited at the Manor Cartier or saw his grand-daughter. His own career of late years had been marked by long sojourns in Quebec, Montreal and even New York; yet he always came back to St. Saviour's when he was penniless, and was there started afresh by Jean Jacques. Some said that Carmen had gone back to Spain, but others discredited that, for, if she had done so, certainly old Sebastian Dolores would have gone also. Others continued to insist that she had gone off with a man; but there was George Masson at Laplatte living alone, and never going twenty miles away from home, and he was the only person under suspicion. Others again averred that since her flight Carmen had become a loose woman in Montreal; but the New Cure came down on that with a blow which no one was tempted to invite again.

M. Savry's method of punishing was of a kind to make men shrink. If Carmen Barbille had become a loose woman in Montreal, how did any member of his flock know that it was the case? What company had he kept in Montreal that he could say that? Did he see the woman--or did he hear about her? And if he heard, what sort of company was he keeping when he went to Montreal without his wife to hear such things? That was final, and the slanderer was under a cloud for a time, by reason of the anger of his own wife. It was about this time that the good priest preached from the text, "Judge not that ye be not judged," and said that there were only ten commandments on the tables of stone; but that the ten included all the commandments which the Church made for every man, and which every man, knowing his own weakness, must also make for himself.

His flock understood, though they did refrain, every one, from looking towards the place where Jean Jacques sat with Ma'm'selle--she was always called that, as though she was a great lady; or else she was called "the little Ma'm'selle Zoe," even when she had grown almost as tall as her mother had been.

Though no one looked towards the place where Jean Jacques and his daughter sat when this sermon was preached, and although Zoe seemed not to apprehend personal reference in the priest's words, when she reached home, after talking to her father about casual things all the way, she flew to her room, and, locking the door, flung herself on her bed and cried till her body felt as though it had been beaten by rods. Then she suddenly got up and, from a drawer, took out two things--an old photograph of her mother at the time of her marriage, and Carmen's guitar, which she had made her own on the day after the flight, and had kept hidden ever since. She lay on the bed with her cheek pressed to the guitar, and her eyes hungrily feeding on the face of a woman whose beauty belonged to spheres other than where she had spent the thirteen years of her married life.

Zoe had understood more even at the time of the crisis than they thought she did, child though she was; and as the years had gone on she had grasped the meaning of it all more clearly perhaps than anyone at all except her adored friends Judge Carcasson, at whose home she had visited in Montreal, and M. Fille.

The thing last rumoured about her mother in the parish was that she had become an actress. To this Zoe made no protest in her mind. It was better than many other possibilities, and she fixed her mind on it, so saving herself from other agonizing speculations. In a fixed imagination lay safety. In her soul she knew that, no matter what happened, her mother would never return to the Manor Cartier.

The years had not deepened confidence between father and daughter. A shadow hung between them. They laughed and talked together, were even boisterous in their fun sometimes, and yet in the eyes of both was the forbidden thing--the deserted city into which they could not enter. He could not speak to the child of the shame of her mother; she could not speak of that in him which had contributed to that mother's shame--the neglect which existed to some degree in her own life with him. This was chiefly so because his enterprises had grown to such a number and height, that he seemed ever to be counting them, ever struggling to the height, while none of his ventures ever reached that state of success when it "ran itself", although as years passed men called him rich, and he spent and loaned money so freely that they called him the Money Master, or the Money Man Wise, in deference to his philosophy.

Zoe was not beautiful, but there was a wondrous charm in her deep brown eyes and in the expression of her pretty, if irregular, features. Sometimes her face seemed as small as that of a young child, and alive with eerie fancies; and always behind her laughter was something which got into her eyes, giving them a haunting melancholy. She had no signs

of hysteria, though now and then there came heart-breaking little outbursts of emotion which had this proof that they were not hysteria-- they were never seen by others. They were sacred to her own solitude. While in Montreal she had tasted for the first time the joys of the theatre, and had then secretly read numbers of plays, which she bought from an old bookseller, who was wise enough to choose them for her. She became possessed of a love for the stage even before Gerard Fynes came upon the scene. The beginning of it all was the rumour that her mother was now an actress; yet the root-cause was far down in a temperament responsive to all artistic things.

The coming of the Man from Outside acted on the confined elements of her nature like the shutter of a camera. It let in a world of light upon unexplored places, it set free elements of being which had not before been active. She had been instantly drawn to Gerard Fynes. He had the distance from her own life which provoked interest, and in that distance was the mother whom perhaps it was her duty to forget, yet for whom she had a longing which grew greater as the years went on.

Gerard Fynes could talk well, and his vivid pictures of his short play-acting career absorbed her; and all the time she was vigilant for some name, for the description of some actress which would seem to be a clue to the lost spirit of her life. This clue never came, but before she gave up hope of it, the man had got nearer to her than any man had ever done.

After meeting him she awoke to the fact that there was a difference between men, that it was not the same thing to be young as to be old; that the reason why she could kiss the old Judge and the little Clerk of the Court, and not kiss, say, the young manager of the great lumber firm who came every year for a fortnight's fishing at St. Saviour's, was one which had an understandable cause and was not a mere matter of individual taste. She had been good friends with this young manager, who was only thirty years of age, and was married, but when he had wanted to kiss her on saying good-bye one recent summer, she had said, "Oh, no, oh, no, that would spoil it all!" Yet when he had asked her why, and what she meant, she could not tell him. She did not know; but by the end of the first week after Gerard Fynes had been brought to the Manor Cartier by Louis Charron, she knew.

She had then been suddenly awakened from mere girlhood. Judge Carcasson saw the difference in her on a half-hour's visit as he passed westward, and he had said to M. Fille, "Who is the man, my keeper of the treasure?" The reply had been of such a sort that the Judge was startled:

"Tut, tut," he had exclaimed, "an actor--an actor once a lawyer! That's serious. She's at an age--and with a temperament like hers she'll believe anything, if once her affections are roused. She has a flair for the romantic, for the thing that's out of reach--the bird on the highest branch, the bird in the sky beyond ours, the song that was lost before time was, the light that never was on sea or land. Why, damn it, damn it all, my Solon, here's the beginning of a case in Court unless we can lay the fellow by the heels! How long is he here for?"

When M. Fille had told him that he would stay for another month for certain, and no doubt much longer, if there seemed a prospect of winning the heiress of the Manor Cartier, the Judge gave a groan.

"We must get him away, somehow," he said. "Where does he stay?"

"At the house of Louis Charron," was the reply. "Louis Charron--isn't he the fellow that sells whisky without a license?"

"It is so, monsieur."

The Judge moved his head from side to side like a bear in a cage. "It is that, is it, my Fille? By the thumb of the devil, isn't it time then that Louis Charron was arrested for breaking the law? Also how do we know but that the interloping fellow Fynes is an agent for a whisky firm perhaps? Couldn't he, then, on suspicion, be arrested with--"

The Clerk of the Court shook his head mournfully. His Judge was surely becoming childish in his old age. He looked again closely at the great man, and saw a glimmer of moisture in the grey eyes. It was clear that Judge Carcasson felt deeply the dangers of the crisis, and that the futile outburst had merely been the agitated protest of the helpless.

"The man is what he says he is--an actor; and it would be folly to arrest him. If our Zoe is really fond of him, it would only make a martyr of him."

As he made this reply M. Fille looked furtively at the other--out of the corner of his eye, as it were. The reply of the Judge was impatient, almost peevish and rough. "Did you think I was in earnest, my punchinello? Surely I don't look so young as all that. I am over sixty-five, and am therefore mentally developed!"

M. Fille was exactly sixty-five years of age, and the blow was a shrewd one. He drew himself up with rigid dignity.

"You must feel sorry sometimes for those who suffered when your mind was undeveloped, monsieur," he answered. "You were a judge at forty-nine, and you defended poor prisoners for twenty years before that."

The Judge was conquered, and he was never the man to pretend he was not beaten when he was. He admired skill too much for that. He squeezed M. Fille's arm and said:

"I've been quick with my tongue myself, but I feel sure now, that it's through long and close association with my Clerk of the Court."

"Ah, monsieur, you are so difficult to understand!" was the reply. "I have known you all these years, and yet--"

"And yet you did not know how much of the woman there was in me! . . .
But yes, it is that. It is that which I fear with our Zoe. Women break

out--they break out, and then there is the devil to pay. Look at her mother. She broke out. It was not inevitable. It was the curse of opportunity, the wrong thing popping up to drive her mad at the wrong moment. Had the wrong thing come at the right time for her, when she was quite sane, she would be yonder now with our philosopher. Perhaps she would not be contented if she were there, but she would be there; and as time goes on, to be where we were in all things which concern the affections, that is the great matter."

"Ah, yes, ah, yes," was the bright-eyed reply of that Clerk, "there is no doubt of that! My sister and I there, we are fifty years together, never with the wrong thing at the wrong time, always the thing as it was, always to be where we were."

The Judge shook his head. "There is an eternity of difference, Fille, between the sister and brother and the husband and wife. The sacredness of isolation is the thing which holds the brother and sister together. The familiarity of--but never mind what it is that so often forces husband and wife apart. It is there, and it breaks out in rebellion as it did with the wife of Jean Jacques Barbille. As she was a strong woman in her way, it spoiled her life, and his too when it broke out."

M. Fille's face lighted with memory and feeling. "Ah, a woman of powerful emotions, monsieur, that is so! I think I never told you, but at the last, in my office, when she went, she struck George Masson in the face. It was a blow that--but there it was; I have never liked to think of it. When I do, I shudder. She was a woman who might have been in other circumstances--but there!"

The Judge suddenly stopped in his walk and faced round on his friend. "Did you ever know, my Solon," he said, "that it was not Jean Jacques who saved Carmen at the wreck of the Antoine, but it was she who saved him; and yet she never breathed of it in all the years. One who was saved from the Antoine told me of it. Jean Jacques was going down. Carmen gave him her piece of wreckage to hang on to, and swam ashore without help. He never gave her the credit. There was something big in the woman, but it did not come out right."

M. Fille threw up his hands. "Grace de Dieu, is it so that she saved Jean Jacques? Then he would not be here if it had not been for her?"

"That is the obvious deduction, Maitre Fille," replied the Judge.

The Clerk of the Court seemed moved. "He did not treat her ill. I know that he would take her back to-morrow if he could. He has never forgotten. I saw him weeping one day--it was where she used to sing to the flax-beaters by the Beau Cheval. I put my hand on his shoulder, and said, 'I know, I comprehend; but be a philosopher, Jean Jacques.'"

"What did he say?" asked the Judge.

"He drew himself up. 'In my mind, in my soul, I am philosopher always,' he said, 'but my eyes are the windows of my heart, m'sieu'. They look

out and see the sorrow of one I loved. It is for her sorrow that I weep, not for my own. I have my child, I have money; the world says to me, "How goes it, my friend?" I have a home--a home; but where is she, and what does the world say to her?"

The Judge shook his head sadly. "I used to think I knew life, but I come to the belief in the end that I know nothing. Who could have guessed that he would have spoken like that!"

"He forgave her, monsieur."

The Judge nodded mournfully. "Yes, yes, but I used to think it is such men who forgive one day and kill the next. You never can tell where they will explode, philosophy or no philosophy."

The Judge was right. After all the years that had passed since his wife had left him, Jean Jacques did explode. It was the night of his birthday party at which was present the Man from Outside. It was in the hour when he first saw what the Clerk of the Court had seen some time before--the understanding between Zoe and Gerard Fynes. It had never occurred to him that there was any danger. Zoe had been so indifferent to the young men of St. Saviour's and beyond, had always been so much his friend and the friend of those much older than himself, like Judge Carcasson and M. Fille, that he had not yet thought of her electing to go and leave him alone.

To leave him alone! To be left alone--it had never become a possibility to his mind. It did not break upon him with its full force all at once. He first got the glimmer of it, then the glimmer grew to a glow, and the glow to a great red light, in which his brain became drunk, and all his philosophy was burned up like wood-shavings in a fiery furnace.

"Did you like it so much?" Zoe had asked when her song was finished, and the Man from Outside had replied, "Ah, but splendid, splendid! It got into every corner of every one of us."

"Into the senses--why not into the heart? Songs are meant for the heart," said Zoe.

"Yes, yes, certainly," was the young man's reply, "but it depends upon the song whether it touches the heart more than the senses. Won't you sing that perfect thing, 'La Claire Fontaine'?" he added, with eyes as bright as passion and the hectic fires of his lung-trouble could make them.

She nodded and was about to sing, for she loved the song, and it had been ringing in her head all day; but at that point M. Fille rose, and with his glass raised high--for at that moment Seraphe Corniche and another carried round native wine and cider to the company--he said:

"To Monsieur Jean Jacques Barbille, and his fifty years, good health--bonne sante! This is his birthday. To a hundred years for Jean Jacques!"

Instantly everyone was up with glass raised, and Zoe ran and threw her arms round her father's neck. "Kiss me before you drink," she said.

With a touch almost solemn in its tenderness Jean Jacques drew her head to his shoulder and kissed her hair, then her forehead. "My blessed one --my angel," he whispered; but there was a look in his eyes which only M. Fille had seen there before. It was the look which had been in his eyes at the flax-beaters' place by the river.

"Sing--father, you must sing," said Zoe, and motioned to the fiddler. "Sing It's Fifty Years," she cried eagerly. They all repeated her request, and he could but obey.

Jean Jacques' voice was rather rough, but he had some fine resonant notes in it, and presently, with eyes fastened on the distance, and with free gesture and much expression, he sang the first verse of the haunting ballad of the man who had reached his fifty years:

"Wherefore these flowers?
This fete for me?
Ah, no, it is not fifty years,
Since in my eyes the light you see
First shone upon life's joys and tears!
How fast the heedless days have flown
Too late to wail the misspent hours,
To mourn the vanished friends I've known,
To kneel beside love's ruined bowers.
Ah, have I then seen fifty years,
With all their joys and hopes and fears!"

Through all the verses he ranged, his voice improving with each phrase, growing more resonant, till at last it rang out with a ragged richness which went home to the hearts of all. He was possessed. All at once he was conscious that the beginning of the end of things was come for him; and that now, at fifty, in no sphere had he absolutely "arrived," neither in home nor fortune, nor--but yes, there was one sphere of success; there was his fatherhood. There was his daughter, his wonderful Zoe. He drew his eyes from the distance, and saw that her ardent look was not towards him, but towards one whom she had known but a few weeks.

Suddenly he stopped in the middle of a verse, and broke forward with his arms outstretched, laughing. He felt that he must laugh, or he would cry; and that would be a humiliating thing to do.

"Come, come, my friends, my children, enough of that!" he cried. "We'll have no more maundering. Fifty years--what are fifty years! Think of Methuselah! It's summer in the world still, and it's only spring at St. Saviour's. It's the time of the first flowers. Let's dance--no, no, never mind the Cure to-night! He will not mind. I'll settle it with him. We'll dance the gay quadrille."

He caught the hands of the two youngest girls present, and nodded at the

fiddler, who at once began to tune his violin afresh. One of the joyous young girls, however, began to plead with him.

"Ah, no, let us dance, but at the last--not yet, M'sieu' Jean Jacques! There is Zoe's song, we must have that, and then we must have charades. Here is M'sieu' Fynes--he can make splendid charades for us. Then the dance at the last--ah, yes, yes, M'sieu' Jean Jacques! Let it be like that. We all planned it, and though it is your birthday, it's us are making the fete."

"As you will then, as you will, little ones," Jean Jacques acquiesced with a half-sigh; but he did not look at his daughter. Somehow, suddenly, a strange constraint possessed him where Zoe was concerned. "Then let us have Zoe's song; let us have 'La Claire Fontaine'," cried the black-eyed young madcap who held Jean Jacques' arms.

But Zoe interrupted. "No, no," she protested, "the singing spell is broken. We will have the song after the charades--after the charades."

"Good, good--after the charades!" they all cried, for there would be charades like none which had ever been played before, with a real actor to help them, to carry them through as they did on the stage. To them the stage was compounded of mystery, gaiety and the forbidden.

So, for the next half-hour they were all at the disposal of the Man from Outside, who worked as though it was a real stage, and they were real players, and there were great audiences to see them. It was all quite wonderful, and it involved certain posings, attitudes, mimicry and pantomime, for they were really ingenious charades.

So it happened that Zoe's fingers often came in touch with those of the stage-manager, that his hands touched her shoulders, that his cheek brushed against her dark hair once, and that she had sensations never experienced before. Why was it that she thrilled when she came near to him, that her whole body throbbed and her heart fluttered when their shoulders or arms touched? Her childlike nature, with all its warmth and vibration of life, had never till now felt the stir of sex in its vital sense. All men had in one way been the same to her; but now she realized that there was a world-wide difference between her Judge Carcasson, her little Clerk of the Court, and this young man whose eyes drank hers. She had often been excited, even wildly agitated, had been like a sprite let loose in quiet ways; but that was mere spirit. Here was body and senses too; here was her whole being alive to a music, which had an aching sweetness and a harmony coaxing every sense into delight.

"To-morrow evening, by the flume, where the beechtrees are--come--at six. I want to speak with you. Will you come?"

Thus whispered the maker of this music of the senses, who directed the charades, but who was also directing the course of another life than his own.

"Yes, if I can," was Zoe's whispered reply, and the words shook as she

said them; for she felt that their meeting in the beech-trees by the flume would be of consequence beyond imagination.

Judge Carcasson had always said that Zoe had judgment beyond her years; M. Fille had remarked often that she had both prudence and shrewdness as well as a sympathetic spirit; but M. Fille's little whispering sister, who could never be tempted away from her home to any house, to whom the market and the church were like pilgrimages to distant wilds, had said to her brother:

"Wait, Armand--wait till Zoe is waked, and then prudence and wisdom will be but accident. If all goes well, you will see prudence and wisdom; but if it does not, you will see--ah, but just Zoe!"

The now alert Jean Jacques had seen the whispering of the two, though he did not know what had been said. It was, however, something secret, and if it was secret, then it was--yes, it was love; and love between his daughter and that waif of the world--the world of the stage--in which men and women were only grown-up children, and bad grown-up children at that--it was not to be endured. One thing was sure, the man should come to the Manor Cartier no more. He would see to that to-morrow. There would be no faltering or paltering on his part. His home had been shaken to its foundations once, and he was determined that it should not fall about his ears a second time. An Englishman, an actor, a Protestant, and a renegade lawyer! It was not to be endured.

The charade now being played was the best of the evening. One of the madcap friends of Zoe was to be a singing-girl. She was supposed to carry a tambourine. When her turn to enter came, with a look of mischief and a gay dancing step, she ran into the room. In her hands was a guitar, not a tambourine. When Zoe saw the guitar she gave a cry.

"Where did you get that?" she asked in a low, shocked, indignant voice.

"In your room--your bedroom," was the half-frightened answer. "I saw it on the dresser, and I took it."

"Come, come, let's get on with the charade," urged the Man from Outside.

On the instant's pause, in which Zoe looked at her lover almost involuntarily, and without fully understanding what he said, someone else started forward with a smothered exclamation--of anger, of horror, of dismay. It was Jean Jacques. He was suddenly transformed.

His eyes were darkened by hideous memory, his face alight with passion. He caught from the girl's hands the guitar--Carmen's forgotten guitar which he had not seen for seven years--how well he knew it! With both hands he broke it across his knee. The strings, as they snapped, gave a shrill, wailing cry, like a voice stopped suddenly by death. Stepping jerkily to the fireplace he thrust it into the flame.

"Ah, there!" he said savagely. "There--there!" When he turned round slowly again, his face--which he had never sought to control before he

had his great Accident seven years ago--was under his command.
A strange, ironic-almost sardonic-smile was on his lips.

"It's in the play," he said.

"No, it's not in the charade, Monsieur Barbille," said the Man from
Outside fretfully.

"That is the way I read it, m'sieu'," retorted Jean Jacques, and he made
a motion to the fiddler.

"The dance! The dance!" he exclaimed.

But yet he looked little like a man who wished to dance, save upon a
grave.

CHAPTER XIV

"I DO NOT WANT TO GO"

It is a bad thing to call down a crisis in the night-time. A "scene" at
midnight is a savage enemy of ultimate understanding, and that Devil,
called Estrangement, laughs as he observes the objects of his attention
in conflict when the midnight candle burns.

He should have been seized with a fit of remorse, however, at the sight
he saw in the Manor Cartier at midnight of the day when Jean Jacques
Barbille had reached his fiftieth year. There is nothing which, for
pathos and for tragedy, can compare with a struggle between the young
and the old.

The Devil of Estrangement when he sees it, may go away and indulge
himself in sleep; for there will be no sleep for those who, one young and
the other old, break their hearts on each other's anvils, when the lights
are low and it is long till morning.

When Jean Jacques had broken the forgotten guitar which his daughter had
retrieved from her mother's life at the Manor Cartier (all else he had
had packed and stored away in the flour-mill out of sight) and thrown it
in the fire, there had begun a revolt in the girl's heart, founded on a
sense of injustice, but which itself became injustice also; and that is a
dark thing to come between those who love--even as parent and child.

After her first exclamation of dismay and pain, Zoe had regained her
composure, and during the rest of the evening she was full of feverish
gaiety. Indeed her spirits and playful hospitality made the evening a
success in spite of the skeleton at the feast. Jean Jacques had also
roused himself, and, when the dance began, he joined in with spirit,
though his face was worn and haggard even when lighted by his smile. But
though the evening came to the conventional height of hilarity, there was

a note running through it which made even the youngest look at each other, as though to say, "Now, what's going to happen next!"

Three people at any rate knew that something was going to happen. They were Zoe, the Man from Outside and M. Fille. Zoe had had more than one revelation that night, and she felt again as she did one day, seven years before, when, coming home from over the hills, she had stepped into a house where Horror brooded as palpably as though it sat beside the fire, or hung above the family table. She had felt something as soon as she had entered the door that far-off day, though the house seemed empty. It was an emptiness which was filled with a torturing presence or torturing presences. It had stilled her young heart. What was it? She had learned the truth soon enough. Out of the sunset had come her father with a face twisted with misery, and as she ran to him, he had caught her by both shoulders, looked through her eyes to something far beyond, and hoarsely said: "She is gone--gone from us! She has run away from home! Curse her baptism--curse it, curse it!"

Zoe could never forget these last words she had ever heard her father speak of Carmen. They were words which would make any Catholic shudder to hear. It was a pity he had used them, for they made her think at last that her mother had been treated with injustice. This, in spite of the fact that in the days, now so far away, when her mother was with them she had ever been nearer to her father, and that, after first childhood, she and her mother were not so close as they had been, when she went to sleep to the humming of a chanson of Cadiz. Her own latent motherhood, however, kept stealing up out of the dim distances of childhood's ignorance and, with modesty and allusiveness, whispering knowledge in her ear. So it was that now she looked back pensively to the years she had spent within sight and sound of her handsome mother, and out of the hunger of her own spirit she had come to idealize her memory. It was good to have a loving father; but he was a man, and he was so busy just when she wanted--when she wanted she knew not what, but at least to go and lay her head on a heart that would understand what was her sorrow, her joy, or her longing.

And now here at last was come Crisis, which showed its thunderous head in the gay dance, and shook his war-locks in the fire, where her mother's guitar had shrieked in its last agony.

When all the guests had gone, when the bolts had been shot home, and old Seraphe Corniche had gone to bed, father and daughter came face to face.

There was a moment's pause, as the two looked at each other, and then Zoe came up to Jean Jacques to kiss him good-night. It was her way of facing the issue. Instinctively she knew that he would draw back, and that the struggle would begin. It might almost seem that she had invited it; for she had let the Man from Outside hold her hand for far longer than courtesy required, while her father looked on with fretful eyes--even with a murmuring which was not a benediction. Indeed, he had evaded shaking hands with his hated visitor by suddenly offering him a cigar, and then in the doorway itself handing a lighted match.

"His eminence, Cardinal Christophe, gave these cigars to me when he passed through St. Saviour's five years ago," Jean Jacques had remarked loftily, "and I always smoke one on my birthday. I am a good Catholic, and his eminence rested here for a whole day."

He had had a grim pleasure in avoiding the handshake, and in having the Protestant outsider smoke the Catholic cigar! In his anger it seemed to him that he had done something worthy almost of the Vatican, indeed of the great Cardinal Christophe himself. Even in his moments of crisis, in his hours of real tragedy, in the times when he was shaken to the centre, Jean Jacques fancied himself more than a little. It was as the master-carpenter had remarked seven years before, he was always involuntarily saying, "Here I come--look at me. I am Jean Jacques Barbille!"

When Zoe reached out a hand to touch his arm, and raised her face as though to kiss him good-night, Jean Jacques drew back.

"Not yet, Zoe," he said. "There are some things--What is all this between you and that man? . . . I have seen. You must not forget who you are--the daughter of Jean Jacques Barbille, of the Manor Cartier, whose name is known in the whole province, who was asked to stand for the legislature. You are Zoe Barbille--Mademoiselle Zoe Barbille. We do not put on airs. We are kind to our neighbours, but I am descended from the Baron of Beaugard. I have a place--yes, a place in society; and it is for you to respect it. You comprehend?"

Zoe flushed, but there was no hesitation whatever in her reply. "I am what I have always been, and it is not my fault that I am the daughter of M. Jean Jacques Barbille! I have never done anything which was not good enough for the Manor Cartier." She held her head firmly as she said it.

Now Jean Jacques flushed, and he did hesitate in his reply. He hated irony in anyone else, though he loved it in himself, when heaven gave him inspiration thereto. He was in a state of tension, and was ready to break out, to be a force let loose--that is the way he would have expressed it; and he was faced by a new spirit in his daughter which would surely spring the mine, unless he secured peace by strategy. He had sense enough to feel the danger.

He did not see, however, any course for diplomacy here, for she had given him his cue in her last words. As a pure logician he was bound to take it, though it might lead to drama of a kind painful to them both.

"It is not good enough for the Manor Cartier that you go falling in love with a nobody from nowhere," he responded.

"I am not falling in love," she rejoined.

"What did you mean, then, by looking at him as you did; by whispering together; by letting him hold your hand when he left, and him looking at you as though he'd eat you up--without sugar!"

"I said I was not falling in love," she persisted, quietly, but with

characteristic boldness. "I am in love."

"You are in love with him--with that interloper! Heaven of heavens, do you speak the truth? Answer me, Zoe Barbille."

She bridled. "Certainly I will answer. Did you think I would let a man look at me as he did, that I would look at a man as I looked at him, that I would let him hold my hand as I did, if I did not love him? Have you ever seen me do it before?"

Her voice was even and quiet--as though she had made up her mind on a course, and meant to carry it through to the end.

"No, I never saw you look at a man like that, and everything is as you say, but--" his voice suddenly became uneven and higher--pitched and a little hoarse, "but he is English, he is an actor--only that; and he is a Protestant."

"Only that?" she asked, for the tone of his voice was such as one would use in speaking of a toad or vermin, and she could not bear it. "Is it a disgrace to be any one of those things?"

"The Barbilles have been here for two hundred years; they have been French Catholics since the time of"--he was not quite sure--"since the time of Louis XI.," he added at a venture, and then paused, overcome by his own rashness.

"Yes, that is a long time," she said, "but what difference does it make? We are just what we are now, and as if there never had been a Baron of Beaugard. What is there against Gerard except that he is an actor, that he is English, and that he is a Protestant? Is there anything?"

"Sacre, is it not enough? An actor, what is that--to pretend to be someone else and not to be yourself!"

"It would be better for a great many people to be someone else rather than themselves--for nothing; and he does it for money."

"For money! What money has he got? You don't know. None of us know. Besides, he's a Protestant, and he's English, and that ends it. There never has been an Englishman or a Protestant in the Barbille family, and it shan't begin at the Manor Cartier." Jean Jacques' voice was rising in proportion as he perceived her quiet determination. Here was something of the woman who had left him seven years ago--left this comfortable home of his to go to disgrace and exile, and God only knew what else! Here in this very room--yes, here where they now were, father and daughter, stood husband and wife that morning when he had his hand on the lever prepared to destroy the man who had invaded his home; who had cast a blight upon it, which remained after all the years; after he had done all a man could do to keep the home and the woman too. The woman had gone; the home remained with his daughter in it, and now again there was a fight for home and the woman. Memory reproduced the picture of the mother standing just where the daughter now stood, Carmen quiet and well in hand, and

himself all shaken with weakness, and with all power gone out of him-- even the power which rage and a murderous soul give.

But yet this was different. There was no such shame here as had fallen on him seven years ago. But there was a shame after its kind; and if it were not averted, there was the end of the home, of the prestige, the pride and the hope of "M'sieu' Jean Jacques, philosophe."

"What shall not begin here at the Manor Cartier?" she asked with burning cheek.

"The shame--it shall not begin here."

"What shame, father?"

"Of marriage with a Protestant and an actor."

"You will not let me marry him?" she persisted stubbornly.

Her words seemed to shake him all to pieces. It was as though he was going through the older tragedy all over again. It had possessed him ever since the sight of Carmen's guitar had driven him mad three hours ago. He swayed to and fro, even as he did when his hand left the lever and he let the master-carpenter go free. It was indeed a philosopher under torture, a spirit rocking on its anchor. Just now she had put into words herself what, even in his fear, he had hoped had no place in her mind--marriage with the man. He did not know this daughter of his very well. There was that in her which was far beyond his ken. Thousands of miles away in Spain it had origin, and the stream of tendency came down through long generations, by courses unknown to him.

"Marry him--you want to marry him!" he gasped. "You, my Zoe, want to marry that tramp of a Protestant!"

Her eyes blazed in anger. Tramp--the man with the air of a young Alexander, with a voice like the low notes of the guitar thrown to the flames! Tramp!

"If I love him I ought to marry him," she answered with a kind of calmness, however, though all her body was quivering. Suddenly she came close to her father, a great sympathy welled up in her eyes, and her voice shook.

"I do not want to leave you, father, and I never meant to do so. I never thought of it as possible; but now it is different. I want to stay with you; but I want to go with him too."

Presently as she seemed to weaken before him, he hardened. "You can't have both," he declared with as much sternness as was possible to him, and with a Norman wilfulness which was not strength. "You shall not marry an actor and a Protestant. You shall not marry a man like that--never--never--never. If you do, you will never have a penny of mine, and I will never--"

"Oh, hush--Mother of Heaven, hush!" she cried. "You shall not put a curse on me too."

"What curse?" he burst forth, passion shaking him. "You cursed my mother's baptism. It would be a curse to be told that you would see me no more, that I should be no more part of this home. There has been enough of that curse here. . . . Ah, why--why--" she added with a sudden rush of indignation, "why did you destroy the only thing I had of hers? It was all that was left--her guitar. I loved it so."

All at once, with a cry of pain, she turned and ran to the door--entering on the staircase which led to her room. In the doorway she turned.

"I can't help it. I can't help it, father. I love him--but I love you too," she cried. "I don't want to go--oh, I don't want to go! Why do you--?" her voice choked; she did not finish the sentence; or if she did, he could not hear.

Then she opened the door wide, and disappeared into the darkness of the unlighted stairway, murmuring, "Pity--have pity on me, holy Mother, Vierge Marie!" Then the door closed behind her almost with a bang.

After a moment of stupefied inaction Jean Jacques hurried over and threw open the door she had closed. "Zoe--little Zoe, come back and say good-night," he called. But she did not hear, for, with a burst of crying, she had hurried into her own room and shut and locked the door.

It was a pity, a measureless pity, as Mary the Mother must have seen, if she could see mortal life at all, that Zoe did not hear him. It might have altered the future. As it was, the Devil of Estrangement might well be content with his night's work.

CHAPTER XV

BON MARCHE

Vilray was having its market day, and everyone was either going to or coming from market, or buying and selling in the little square by the Court House. It was the time when the fruits were coming in, when vegetables were in full yield, when fish from the Beau Cheval were to be had in plenty--from mud-cats and suckers, pike and perch, to rock-bass, sturgeon and even maskinonge. Also it was the time of year when butter and eggs, chickens and ducks were so cheap that it was a humiliation not to buy. There were other things on sale also, not for eating and drinking, but for wear and household use--from pots and pans to rag-carpets and table-linen, from woollen yarn to pictures of the Virgin and little calvaries.

These were side by side with dried apples, bottled fruits, jars of maple

syrup, and cordials of so generous and penetrating a nature that the currant and elderberry wine by which they were flanked were tipples for babes beside them. Indeed, when a man wanted to forget himself quickly he drank one of these cordials, in preference to the white whisky so commonly imbibed in the parishes. But the cordials being expensive, they were chiefly bought for festive occasions like a wedding, a funeral, a confirmation, or the going away of some young man or young woman to the monastery or the convent to forget the world. Meanwhile, if these spiritual argonauts drank it, they were likely to forget the world on the way to their voluntary prisons. It was very seldom that a man or woman bought the cordials for ordinary consumption, and when that was done, it would almost make a parish talk! Yet cordials of nice brown, of delicate green, of an enticing yellow colour, were here for sale at Vilray market on the morning after the painful scene at the Manor Cartier between Zoe and her father.

The market-place was full--fuller than it had been for many a day. A great many people were come in as much to "make fete" as to buy and sell. It was a saint's day, and the bell of St. Monica's had been ringing away cheerfully twice that morning. To it the bell of the Court House had made reply, for a big case was being tried in the court. It was a river-driving and lumber case for which many witnesses had been called; and there were all kinds of stray people in the place--red-shirted river-drivers, a black-coated Methodist minister from Chalfonte, clerks from lumber-firms, and foremen of lumber-yards; and among these was one who greatly loved such a day as this when he could be free from work, and celebrate himself!

Other people might celebrate saints dead and gone, and drink to 'La Patrie', and cry "Vive Napoleon!" or "Vive la Republique!" or "Vive la Reine!" though this last toast of the Empire was none too common--but he could only drink with real sincerity to the health of Sebastian Dolores, which was himself. Sebastian Dolores was the pure anarchist, the most complete of monomaniacs.

"Here comes the father of the Spanische," remarked Mere Langlois, who presided over a heap of household necessities, chiefly dried fruits, preserves and pickles, as Sebastian Dolores appeared not far away.

"Good-for-nothing villain! I pity the poor priest that confesses him."

"Who is the Spanische?" asked a young woman from her own stall or stand very near, as she involuntarily arranged her hair and adjusted her waist-belt; for the rakish-looking reprobate, with the air of having been somewhere, was making towards them; and she was young enough to care how she looked when a man, who took notice, was near. Her own husband had been a horse-doctor, farmer, and sportsman of a kind, and she herself was now a farmer of a kind; and she had only resided in the parish during the three years since she had been married to, and buried, Palass Poucette.

Old Mere Langlois looked at her companion in merchanting irritably, then she remembered that Virginie Poucette was a stranger, in a way, and was therefore deserving of pity, and she said with compassionate patronage:

"Newcomer you--I'd forgotten. Look you then, the Spanische was the wife of my third cousin, M'sieu' Jean Jacques, and--"

Virginie Poucette nodded, and the slight frown cleared from her low yet shapely forehead. "Yes, yes, of course I know. I've heard enough. What a fool she was, and M'sieu' Jean Jacques so rich and kind and good-looking! So this is her father--well, well, well!"

Palass Poucette's widow leaned forward, and looked intently at Sebastian Dolores, who had stopped near by, and facing a couple of barrels on which were exposed some bottles of cordial and home-made wine. He was addressing himself with cheerful words to the dame that owned the merchandise.

"I suppose you think it's a pity Jean Jacques can't get a divorce," said Mere Langlois, rather spitefully to Virginie, for she had her sex's aversion to widows who had had their share of mankind, and were afterwards free to have someone else's share as well. But suddenly repenting, for Virginie was a hard-working widow who had behaved very well for an outsider--having come from Chalfonte beyond the Beau Cheval she added: "But if he was a Protestant and could get a divorce, and you did marry him, you'd make him have more sense than he's got; for you've a quiet sensible way, and you've worked hard since Palass Poucette died."

"Where doesn't he show sense, that M'sieu' Jean Jacques?" the younger woman asked.

"Where? Why, with his girl--with Ma'm'selle." "Everybody I ever heard speaks well of Ma'm'selle Zoe," returned the other warmly, for she had a very generous mind and a truthful, sentimental heart. Mere Langlois sniffed, and put her hands on her hips, for she had a daughter of her own; also she was a relation of Jean Jacques, and therefore resented in one way the difference in their social position, while yet she plumed herself on being kin.

"Then you'll learn something now you never knew before," she said.

"She's been carrying on--there's no other word for it--with an actor fellow--"

"Yes, yes, I did hear about him--a Protestant and an Englishman."

"Well, then, why do you pretend you don't know--only to hear me talk, is it? Take my word, I'd teach cousin Zoe a lesson with all her education and her two years at the convent. Wasn't it enough that her mother should spoil everything for Jean Jacques, and make the Manor Cartier a place to point the finger at, without her bringing disgrace on the parish too! What happened last night--didn't I hear this morning before I had my breakfast! Didn't I--"

She then proceeded to describe the scene in which Jean Jacques had thrown the wrecked guitar of his vanished spouse into the fire. Before she had finished, however, something occurred which swept them into another act

of the famous history of Jean Jacques Barbille and his house.

She had arrived at the point where Zoe had cried aloud in pain at her father's incendiary act, when there was a great stir at the Court House door which opened on the market-place, and vagrant cheers arose. These were presently followed by a more disciplined fusillade; which presently, in turn, was met by hisses and some raucous cries of resentment. These increased as a man appeared on the steps of the Court House, looked round for a moment in a dazed kind of way, then seeing some friends below who were swarming towards him, gave a ribald cry, and scrambled down the steps towards them.

He was the prisoner whose release had suddenly been secured by a piece of evidence which had come as a thunder-clap on judge and jury. Immediately after giving this remarkable evidence the witness--Sebastian Dolores--had left the court-room. He was now engaged in buying cordials in the market-place--in buying and drinking them; for he had pulled the cork out of a bottle filled with a rich yellow liquid, and had drained half the bottle at a gulp. Presently he offered the remainder to a passing carter, who made a gesture of contempt and passed on, for, to him, white whisky was the only drink worth while. Besides, he disliked Sebastian Dolores. Then, with a flourish, the Spaniard tendered the bottle to Madame Langlois and Palass Poucette's widow, at whose corner of merchandise he had now arrived.

Surely there never was a more benign villain and perjurer in the world than Sebastian Dolores! His evidence, given a half-hour before, with every sign of truthfulness, was false. The man--Rocque Valescure--for whom he gave it was no friend of his; but he owned a tavern called "The Red Eagle," a few miles from the works where the Spaniard was employed; also Rocque Valescure's wife set a good table, and Sebastian Dolores was a very liberal feeder; when he was not hungry he was always thirsty. The appeasement of hunger and thirst was now become a problem to him, for his employers at Beauharnais had given him a month's notice because of certain irregularities which had come to their knowledge. Like a wise man Sebastian Dolores had said nothing about this abroad, but had enlarged his credit in every direction, and had then planned this piece of friendly perjury for Rocque Valescure, who was now descending the steps of the Court House to the arms of his friends and amid the execrations of his foes. What the alleged crime was does not matter. It has no vital significance in the history of Jean Jacques Barbille, though it has its place as a swivel on which the future swung.

Sebastian Dolores had saved Rocque Valescure from at least three years in jail, and possibly a very heavy fine as well; and this service must have its due reward. Something for nothing was not the motto of Sebastian Dolores; and he confidently looked forward to having a home at "The Red Eagle" and a banker in its landlord. He was no longer certain that he could rely on help from Jean Jacques, to whom he already owed so much. That was why he wanted to make Rocque Valescure his debtor. It was not his way to perjure his soul for nothing. He had done so in Spain--yet not for nothing either. He had saved his head, which was now doing useful work for himself and for a needy fellow-creature. No one could

doubt that he had helped a neighbour in great need, and had done it at some expense to his own nerve and brain. None but an expert could have lied as he had done in the witness-box. Also he had upheld his lies with a striking narrative of circumstantiality. He made things fit in "like mortised blocks" as the Clerk of the Court said to Judge Carcasson, when they discussed the infamy afterwards with clear conviction that it was perjury of a shameless kind; for one who would perjure himself to save a man from jail, would also swear a man into the gallows-rope. But Judge Carcasson had not been able to charge the jury in that sense, for there was no effective evidence to rebut the untruthful attestation of the Spaniard. It had to be taken for what it was worth, since the prosecuting attorney could not shake it; and yet to the Court itself it was manifestly false witness.

Sebastian Dolores was too wise to throw himself into the arms of his released tavern-keeper here immediately after the trial, or to allow Rocque Valescure a like indiscretion and luxury; for there was a strong law against perjury, and right well Sebastian Dolores knew that old Judge Carcasson would have little mercy on him, in spite of the fact that he was the grandfather of Zoe Barbille. The Judge would probably think that safe custody for his wayward character would be the kindest thing he could do for Zoe. Therefore it was that Sebastian Dolores paid no attention to the progress of the released landlord of "The Red Eagle," though, by a glance out of the corner of his eyes, he made sure that the footsteps of liberated guilt were marching at a tangent from where he was--even to the nearest tavern.

It was enough for Dolores that he should watch the result of his good deed from the isolated area where he now was, in the company of two virtuous representatives of domesticity. His time with liberated guilt would come! He chuckled to think how he had provided himself with a refuge against his hour of trouble. That very day he had left his employment, meaning to return no more, securing his full wages through having suddenly become resentful and troublesome, neglectful--and imperative. To avoid further unpleasantness the firm had paid him all his wages; and he had straightway come to Vilray to earn his bed and board by other means than through a pen, a ledger and a gift for figures. It would not be a permanent security against the future, but it would suffice for the moment. It was a rest-place on the road. If the worst came to the worst, there was his grand-daughter and his dear son-in-law whom he so seldom saw--blood was thicker than water, and he would see to it that it was not thinned by neglect.

Meanwhile he ogled Palass Poucette's widow with one eye, and talked softly with his tongue to Mere Langlois, as he importuned Madame to "Sip the good cordial in the name of charity to all and malice towards none."

"You're a bad man--you, and I want none of your cordials," was Mere Langlois's response. "Malice towards none, indeed! If you and the devil started business in the same street, you'd make him close up shop in a year. I've got your measure, for sure; I have you certain as an arm and a pair of stirrups."

"I go about doing good--only good," returned the old sinner with a leer at the young widow, whose fingers he managed to press unseen, as he swung the little bottle of cordial before the eyes of Mere Langlois. He was not wholly surprised when Palass Poucette's widow did not show abrupt displeasure at his bold familiarity.

A wild thought flashed into his mind. Might there not be another refuge here--here in Palass Poucette's widow! He was sixty-three, it was true, and she was only thirty-two; but for her to be an old man's darling who had no doubt been a young man's slave, that would surely have its weight with her. Also she owned the farm where she lived; and she was pleasant pasturage--that was the phrase he used in his own mind, even as his eye swept from Mere Langlois to hers in swift, hungry inquiry.

He seemed in earnest when he spoke--but that was his way; it had done him service often. "I do good whenever it comes my way to do it," he continued. "I left my work this morning"--he lied of course--"and hired a buggy to bring me over here, all at my own cost, to save a fellow-man. There in the Court House he was sure of prison, with a wife and three small children weeping in 'The Red Eagle'; and there I come at great expense and trouble to tell the truth--before all to tell the truth--and save him and set him free. Yonder he is in the tavern, the work of my hands, a gift to the world from an honest man with a good heart and a sense of justice. But for me there would be a wife and three children in the bondage of shame, sorrow, poverty and misery"--his eyes again ravished the brown eyes of Palass Poucette's widow--"and here again I drink to my own health and to that of all good people--with charity to all and malice towards none!"

The little bottle of golden cordial was raised towards Mere Langlois. The fingers of one hand, however, were again seeking those of the comely young widow who was half behind him, when he felt them caught spasmodically away. Before he had time to turn round he heard a voice, saying: "I should have thought that 'With malice to all and charity towards none,' was your motto, Dolores."

He knew that voice well enough. He had always had a lurking fear that he would hear it say something devastating to him, from the great chair where its owner sat and dispensed what justice a jury would permit him to do. That devastating something would be agony to one who loved liberty and freedom--had not that ever been his watchword, liberty and freedom to do what he pleased in the world and with the world? Yes, he well knew Judge Carcasson's voice. He would have recognized it in the dark--or under the black cap. "M'sieu' le juge !" he said, even before he turned round and saw the faces of the tiny Judge and his Clerk of the Court. There was a kind of quivering about his mouth, and a startled look in his eyes as he faced the two. But there was the widow of Palass Poucette, and, if he was to pursue and frequent her, something must be done to keep him decently figured in her eye and mind.

"It cost me three dollars to come here and save a man from jail to-day, m'sieu' le juge," he added firmly. The Judge pressed the point of his cane against the stomach of the hypocrite and perjurer. "If the Devil

and you meet, he will take off his hat to you, my escaped anarchist"-- Dolores started almost violently now--"for you can teach him much, and Ananias was the merest aboriginal to you. But we'll get you--we'll get you, Dolores. You saved that guilty fellow by a careful and remarkable perjury to-day. In a long experience I have never seen a better performance--have you, monsieur?" he added to M. Fille.

"But once," was the pointed and deliberate reply. "Ah, when was that?" asked Judge Carcasson, interested.

"The year monsieur le juge was ill, and Judge Blaquiere took your place. It was in Vilray at the Court House here."

"Ah--ah, and who was the phenomenon--the perfect liar?" asked the Judge with the eagerness of the expert.

"His name was Sebastian Dolores," meditatively replied M. Fille. "It was even a finer performance than that of to-day."

The Judge gave a little grunt of surprise. "Twice, eh?" he asked. "Yet this was good enough to break any record," he added. He fastened the young widow's eyes. "Madame, you are young, and you have an eye of intelligence. Be sure of this: you can protect yourself against almost anyone except a liar--eh, madame?" he added to Mere Langlois. "I am sure your experience of life and your good sense--"

"My good sense would make me think purgatory was hell if I saw him"-- she nodded savagely at Dolores as she said it, for she had seen that last effort of his to take the fingers of Palass Poucette's widow--"if I saw him there, m'sieu' le juge."

"We'll have you yet--we'll have you yet, Dolores," said the Judge, as the Spaniard prepared to move on. But, as Dolores went, he again caught the eyes of the young widow.

This made him suddenly bold. "'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,'--that is the commandment, is it not, m'sieu' le juge? You are doing against me what I didn't do in Court to-day. I saved a man from your malice."

The crook of the Judge's cane caught the Spaniard's arm, and held him gently.

"You're possessed of a devil, Dolores," he said, "and I hope I'll never have to administer justice in your case. I might be more man than judge. But you will come to no good end. You will certainly--"

He got no further, for the attention of all was suddenly arrested by a wagon driving furiously round the corner of the Court House. It was a red wagon. In it was Jean Jacques Barbille.

His face was white and set; his head was thrust forward, as though looking at something far ahead of him; the pony stallions he was driving

were white with sweat, and he had an air of tragic helplessness and panic.

Suddenly a child ran across the roadway in front of the ponies, and the wild cry of the mother roused Jean Jacques out of his agonized trance. He sprang to his feet, wrenching the horses backward and aside with deftness and presence of mind. The margin of safety was not more than a foot, but the child was saved.

The philosopher of the Manor Cartier seemed to come out of a dream as men and women applauded, and cries arose of "Bravo, M'sieu' Jean Jacques!"

At any other time this would have made Jean Jacques nod and smile, or wave a hand, or exclaim in good fellowship. Now, however, his eyes were full of trouble, and the glassiness of the semi-trance leaving them, they shifted restlessly here and there. Suddenly they fastened on the little group of which Judge Carcasson was the centre. He had stopped his horses almost beside them.

"Ah!" he said, "ah!" as his eyes rested on the Judge. "Ah!" he again exclaimed, as the glance ran from the Judge to Sebastian Dolores. "Ah, mercy of God!" he added, in a voice which had both a low note and a high note--deep misery and shrill protest in one. Then he seemed to choke, and words would not come, but he kept looking, looking at Sebastian Dolores, as though fascinated and tortured by the sight of him.

"What is it, Jean Jacques?" asked the little Clerk of the Court gently, coming forward and laying a hand on the steaming flank of a spent and trembling pony.

As though he could not withdraw his gaze from Sebastian Dolores, Jean Jacques did not look at M. Fil1e; but he thrust out the long whip he carried towards the father of his vanished Carmen and his Zoe's grandfather, and with the deliberation of one to whom speaking was like the laceration of a nerve he said: "Zoe's run away--gone--gone!"

At that moment Louis Charron, his cousin, at whose house Gerard Fynes had lodged, came down the street galloping his horse. Seeing the red wagon, he made for it, and drew rein.

"It's no good, Jean Jacques," he called. "They're married and gone to Montreal--married right under our noses by the Protestant minister at Terrebasse Junction. I've got the telegram here from the stationmaster at Terrebasse. . . . Ah, the villain to steal away like that--only a child--from her own father! Here it is--the telegram. But believe me, an actor, a Protestant and a foreigner--what a devil's mess!"

He waved the telegram towards Jean Jacques.

"Did he owe you anything, Louis?" asked old Mere Langlois, whose practical mind was alert to find the material status of things.

"Not a sou. Well, but he was honest, I'll say that for the rogue and

seducer."

"Seducer--ah, God choke you with your own tongue!" cried Jean Jacques, turning on Louis Charron with a savage jerk of the whip he held. "She is as pure--"

"It is no marriage, of course!" squeaked a voice from the crowd.

"It'll be all right among the English, won't it, monsieur le juge?" asked the gentle widow of Palass Poucette, whom the scene seemed to rouse out of her natural shyness.

"Most sure, madame, most sure," answered the Judge. "It will be all right among the English, and it is all right among the French so far as the law is concerned. As for the Church, that is another matter. But--but see," he added addressing Louis Charron, "does the station-master say what place they took tickets for?"

"Montreal and Winnipeg," was the reply. "Here it is in the telegram. Winnipeg--that's as English as London."

"Winnipeg--a thousand miles!" moaned Jean Jacques.

With the finality which the tickets for Winnipeg signified, the shrill panic emotion seemed to pass from him. In its mumbling, deadening force it was like a sentence on a prisoner.

As many eyes were on Sebastian Dolores as on Jean Jacques. "It's the bad blood that was in her," said a farmer with a significant gesture towards Sebastian Dolores.

"A little bad blood let out would be a good thing," remarked a truculent river-driver, who had given evidence directly contrary to that given by Sebastian Dolores in the trial just concluded. There was a savage look in his eye.

Sebastian Dolores heard, and he was not the man to invite trouble. He could do no good where he was, and he turned to leave the market-place; but in doing so he sought the eye of Virginie Poucette, who, however, kept her face at an angle from him, as she saw Mere Langlois sharply watching her.

"Grandfather, mother and daughter, all of a piece!" said a spiteful woman, as Sebastian Dolores passed her. The look he gave her was not the same as that he had given to Palass Poucette's widow. If it had been given by a Spanish inquisitor to a heretic, little hope would have remained in the heretic's heart. Yet there was a sad patient look on his face, as though he was a martyr. He had no wish to be a martyr; but he had a feeling that for want of other means of expressing their sympathy with Jean Jacques, these rough people might tar and feather him at least; though it was only his misfortune that those sprung from his loins had such adventurous spirits!

Sebastian Dolores was not without a real instinct regarding things. What was in his mind was also passing through that of the river-driver and a few of his friends, and they carefully watched the route he was taking.

Jean Jacques prepared to depart. He had ever loved to be the centre of a picture, but here was a time when to be in the centre was torture. Eyes of morbid curiosity were looking at the open wounds of his heart-ragged wounds made by the shrapnel of tragedy and treachery, not the clean wounds got in a fair fight, easily healed. For the moment at least the little egoist was a mere suffering soul--an epitome of shame, misery and disappointment. He must straightway flee the place where he was tied to the stake of public curiosity and scorn. He drew the reins tighter, and the horses straightened to depart. Then it was that old Judge Carcasson laid a hand on his knee.

"Come, come," he said to the dejected and broken little man, "where is your philosophy?"

Jean Jacques looked at the Judge, as though with a new-born suspicion that henceforth the world would laugh at him, and that Judge Carcasson was setting the fashion; but seeing a pitying moisture in the other's eyes, he drew himself up, set his jaw, and calling on all the forces at his command, he said:

"Moi je suis philosophe!"

His voice frayed a little on the last word, but his head was up now. The Clerk of the Court would have asked to accompany him to the Manor Cartier, but he was not sure that Jean Jacques would like it. He had a feeling that Jean Jacques would wish to have his dark hour alone. So he remained silent, and Jean Jacques touched his horses with the whip. After starting, however, and having been followed for a hundred yards or so by the pitying murmurs and a few I-told-you-so's and revilings for having married as he did, Jean Jacques stopped the ponies. Standing up in the red wagon he looked round for someone whom, for a moment, he did not see in the slowly shifting crowd.

Philosophy was all very well, and he had courageously given his allegiance to it, or a formula of it, a moment before; but there was something deeper and rarer still in the little man's soul. His heart hungered for the two women who had been the joy and pride of his life, even when he had been lost in the business of the material world. They were more to him than he had ever known; they were parts of himself which had slowly developed, as the features and characteristics of ancestors gradually emerge and are emphasized in a descendant as his years increase. Carmen and Zoe were more a part of himself now than they had ever been.

They were gone, the living spirits of his home. Anything that reminded him of them, despite the pain of the reminder, was dear to him. Love was greater than the vengeful desire of injured human nature. His eyes wandered over the people, over the market. At last he saw what he was looking for. He called. A man turned. Jean Jacques beckoned to him.

He came eagerly, he hurried to the red wagon.

"Come home with me," said Jean Jacques.

The words were addressed to Sebastian Dolores, who said to himself that this was a refuge surer than "The Red Eagle," or the home of the widow Poucette. He climbed in beside Jean Jacques with a sigh of content.

"Ah, but that--but that is the end of our philosopher," said Judge Carcasson sadly to the Clerk of the Court, as with amazement he saw this catastrophe.

"Alas! if I had only asked to go with him, as I wished to do!" responded M. Fille. "There, but a minute ago, it was in my mind," he added with a look of pain.

"You missed your chance, falterer," said the Judge severely. "If you have a good thought, act on it--that is the golden rule. You missed your chance. It will never come again. He has taken the wrong turning, our unhappy Jean Jacques."

"Monsieur--oh, monsieur, do not shut the door in the face of God like that!" said the shocked little master of the law. "Those two together --it may be only for a moment."

"Ah, no, my little owl, Jean Jacques will wind the boa-constrictor round his neck like a collar, all for love of those he has lost," answered the Judge with emotion; and he caught M. Fille's arm in the companionship of sorrow.

In silence these two watched the red wagon till it was out of sight.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

He hated irony in anyone else
I said I was not falling in love--I am in love
If you have a good thought, act on it
Philosophers are often stupid in human affairs
The beginning of the end of things was come for him

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