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THE WORKS OF

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

IN THIRTY VOLUMES

THE WHITES AND THE BLUES

NEW YORK

P. F. COLLIER AND SON
M C M I I

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CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

THE PRUSSIANS ON THE RHINE

I. From the Hôtel de la Poste to the Hôtel de la Lanterne	7
II. The Citizeness Teutch	15
III. Euloge Schneider	23
IV. Eugene de Beauharnais	31
V. Mademoiselle de Brumpt	38
VI. Master Nicholas	49
VII. Filial Love, or the Wooden Leg	54
VIII. The Provocation	61
IX. In which Charles is Arrested	67
X. Schneider's Journey	73
XI. The Marriage Proposal	76
XII. Saint-Just	80
XIII. The Wedding of Euloge Schneider	87
XIV. Wishes	92
XV. The Count de Sainte-Hermine	99
XVI. The Foraging Cap	106
XVII. Pichegru	113
XVIII. Charles's Reception	119
XIX. The Spy	125
XX. The Dying Man's Prophecy	132
XXI. The Night Before the Battle	139
XXII. The Battle	144
XXIII. After the Battle	150
XXIV. Citizen Fenouillot, Commercial Traveller for Champagne	155
XXV. Chasseur Falou and Corporal Faraud	161
XXVI. The Prince's Envoy	167
XXVII. Pichegru's Reply	173
XXVIII. The Drum-Head Marriage	181
XXIX. The Prussian Artillery for Six Hundred Francs	190
XXX. The Organ	196
XXXI. In which the Organ-Grinder's Plan Begins to Develop	202
XXXII. The Toast	207
XXXIII. The Order of the Day	212
XXXIV. A Chapter which is but One with the Following Chapter	219
XXXV. In which Abatucci Fulfils the Mission that he has Received from his General, and Charles that which he Received from God	224

THE THIRTEENTH VENDÉMIAIRE

I. A Bird's-Eye View	230
II. A Glimpse of Paris—The Incroyables	234
III. The Merveilleuses	238
IV. The Sections	242
V. The President of the Section le Peletier	247
VI. Three Leaders	253
VII. General Roundhead and the Chief of the Companions of Jehu	256
VIII. The Man in the Green Coat	261
IX. An Incroyable and a Merveilleuse	265
X. Two Portraits	270
XI. Aspasia's Toilet	275
XII. For which Voltaire and Rousseau are to Blame	278
XIII. The Eleventh Vendémiaire	282
XIV. The Twelfth Vendémiaire	286
XV. The Night of the 12th and the 13th Vendémiaire	290
XVI. The Salon of Madame de Staël, the Swedish Ambadress	293
XVII. The Hotel of the Rights of Man	306
XVIII. Citizen Bonaparte	310
XIX. Citizen Garat	314
XX. The Outposts	320
XXI. The Steps of Saint-Roch	325
XXII. The Rout	329
XXIII. The Victory	333
XXIV. The Sword of the Vicomte de Beauharnais	336
XXV. The Map of Marengo	340
XXVI. Marie-Rose-Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie, Vicomtesse Beauharnais	345
XXVII. Where an Angel Steps a Miracle is Performed	349
XXVIII. The Sibyl	354
XXIX. Fortune-Telling	360
XXX. The Pretended Incroyable	365
XXXI. "Macbeth, thou Shalt be King!"	370
XXXII. The Man of the Future	376

THE EIGHTEENTH FRUCTIDOR

I. A Glance at the Provinces	383
II. The Traveller	388
III. The Chartreuse of Seillon	393
IV. The Traitor	398
V. The Judgment	402
VI. Diane of Fargas	407
VII. What was Talked About for More than Three Months in the Little Town of Nantua	412

<u>VIII.</u> A New Companion is Received into the Society of Jehu under the Name of Alcibiades	417
<u>IX.</u> The Comte de Fargas	422
<u>X.</u> The Trouillasse Tower	426
<u>XI.</u> Brother and Sister	431
<u>XII.</u> In which the Reader will Meet some Old Acquaintances	436
<u>XIII.</u> Citizens and Messieurs	441
<u>XIV.</u> The Cause of Citizen-General Bonaparte's Ill-Humor	446
<u>XV.</u> Augereau	452
<u>XVI.</u> The Citizen-Directors	458
<u>XVII.</u> Mademoiselle de Sainte-Amour's Sick-Headache	465
<u>XVIII.</u> The Mission of Mademoiselle de Fargas	470
<u>XIX.</u> The Travellers	476
<u>XX.</u> "The Best of Friends Must Part"	482
<u>XXI.</u> Citizen François Goulin	487
<u>XXII.</u> Colonel Hulot	492
<u>XXIII.</u> The Battle	497
<u>XXIV.</u> Portia	502
<u>XXV.</u> Cadoudal's Idea	507
<u>XXVI.</u> The Road to the Scaffold	513
<u>XXVII.</u> The Execution	518
<u>XXVIII.</u> The Seventh Fructidor	524
<u>XXIX.</u> Jean-Victor Moreau	530
<u>XXX.</u> The Eighteenth Fructidor	536
<u>XXXI.</u> The Temple	542
<u>XXXII.</u> The Exiles	548
<u>XXXIII.</u> The Journey	553
<u>XXXIV.</u> The Embarkation	559
<u>XXXV.</u> Farewell, France!	566

THE EIGHTH CRUSADE

<u>I.</u> Saint-Jean-d'Acre	572
<u>II.</u> The Prisoners	577
<u>III.</u> The Carnage	583
<u>IV.</u> From Ancient Days to Our Own	588
<u>V.</u> Sidney Smith	594
<u>VI.</u> Ptolemais	601
<u>VII.</u> The Scouts	607
<u>VIII.</u> The Beautiful Daughters of Nazareth	613
<u>IX.</u> The Battle of Nazareth	619
<u>X.</u> Mount Tabor	624
<u>XI.</u> The Bullet Merchant	631
<u>XII.</u> How Citizen Pierre-Claude Faraud was made a Sub-Lieutenant	635

<u>XIII.</u>	The Last Assault	640
<u>XIV.</u>	The Last Bulletin	644
<u>XV.</u>	Vanished Dreams	648
<u>XVI.</u>	The Retreat	652
<u>XVII.</u>	Wherein we see that Bonaparte's Presentiments did not Deceive Him	657
<u>XVIII.</u>	Aboukir	662
<u>XIX.</u>	Departure	668

INTRODUCTION

In the preface of "The Companions of Jehu" I told why that romance had been written; and those who have read it cannot fail to have seen where I borrowed from Nodier in the description of the execution, of which he was an ocular witness. In short, I borrowed my dénouement from him.

Now "The Whites and the Blues," being a continuation of "The Companions of Jehu," my readers will not be astonished if I again borrow from Nodier for the beginning of my story.

During his long illness, which was simply a gradual decay of physical and vital strength, I was one of his most constant visitors; and as, on account of his incessant labors, he had not had the time to read my books relating to the epoch with which he was so familiar, he sent for the seven or eight hundred volumes while he was ill and confined to his bed, and read them eagerly.

In proportion as he became better acquainted with my methods, his literary confidence in me increased, until, when I spoke to him of his own work, he would reply: "Oh! I have never had time to do more than outline rough drafts of events which, if you had possessed the facts, would have furnished you with material for ten volumes, instead of the two hundred lines that I have made of them."

And thus it was that he came to relate the four pages which served me as the foundation for the three volumes of "The Companions of Jehu," and the anecdote of Euloge Schneider, from which he declared that I would have made at least ten.

"But," he continued, "some day, my friend, you will write them, and if it is true that any part of us survives, I shall rejoice yonder over your success and shall feel that I have had some share in it."

Well, I have written "The Companions of Jehu," and since the great success which it achieved I have been tormented with a desire to write a great romance, entitled "The Whites and the Blues," from what he told me, taking my point of departure for this new book from Nodier's "Episodes de la Révolution," as I did the motive for a former one from his "Réaction Thermidorienne."

But, as I was about to begin, I was seized by a scruple. This time I wished not only to borrow a few pages from him, but to make him assume a rôle in the action of the drama.

Then I wrote to my dear sister, Marie Mennessier, to request her permission to do what I had already done once without her permission; namely, take a graft from the paternal tree to improve my own stock.

This is what she replied:

Anything and everything that you wish, dear brother Alexandre. I deliver my father to you with as much confidence as if he were your own. His memory is in good hands.

MARIE MENNESSIER-NODIER.

From that moment there was nothing more to stop me; and as I had already outlined my plot, I set to work at once.

I therefore offer this publication to-day; but in giving it to the public, I desire to acquit myself of the following duty:

This book is dedicated to my illustrious friend and collaborator,

CHARLES NODIER.

I have used the word "collaborator," because the trouble I should take in seeking for a better would be thrown away.

ALEX. DUMAS.

THE WHITES AND THE BLUES

PROLOGUE

THE PRUSSIANS ON THE RHINE

CHAPTER I

FROM THE HÔTEL DE LA POSTE TO THE HÔTEL DE LA LANTERNE

On the 21st Frimaire of the year II. (11th of December, 1793), the diligence from Besançon to Strasbourg stopped at nine o'clock in the evening in the courtyard of the Hôtel de la Poste, behind the cathedral.

Five travellers descended from it, but the youngest only merits our attention.

He was a boy of thirteen or fourteen, thin and pale, who might have been taken for a girl dressed in boy's clothes, so sweet and melancholy was the expression of his face. His hair, which he wore cut à la Titus—a fashion which zealous Republicans had adopted in imitation of Talma—was dark brown; eyelashes of the same color shaded eyes of deep blue, which rested, with remarkable intelligence, like two interrogation points, upon men and things. He had thin lips, fine teeth, and a charming smile, and he was dressed in the fashion of the day, if not elegantly, at least so carefully that it was easy to see that a woman had superintended his toilet.

The conductor, who seemed to be particularly watchful of the boy, handed him a small package, like a soldier's knapsack, which could be hung over the shoulders by a pair of straps. Then, looking around, he called: "Hallo! Is there any one here from the Hôtel de la Lanterne looking for a young traveller from Besançon?"

"I'm here," replied a gruff, coarse voice.

And a man who looked like a groom approached. He was hardly distinguishable in the gloom, in spite of the lantern he carried, which lighted nothing but the pavement at his feet. He turned toward the open door of the huge vehicle.

"Ah! so it's you, Sleepy-head," cried the conductor.

"My name's not Sleepy-head; it's Coclès," replied the groom, in a surly tone, "and I am looking for the citizen Charles."

"You come from citizeness Teutch, don't you?" said the boy, in a soft tone that formed an admirable contrast to the groom's surly tones.

"Yes, from the citizeness Teutch. Well, are you ready, citizen?"

"Conductor," said the boy, "you will tell them at home—"

"That you arrived safely, and that there was some one to meet you; don't worry about that, Monsieur Charles."

"Oh, ho!" said the groom, in a tone verging upon a menace, as he drew near the conductor and the boy.

"Well, what do you mean with your 'Oh, ho'?"

"I mean that the words you use may be all right in the Franche-Comté, but that they are all wrong in Alsace."

"Really," said the conductor, mockingly, "you don't say so?"

"And I would advise you," continued citizen Coclès, "to leave your *monsieurs* in your diligence, as they are not in fashion here in Strasbourg. Especially now that we are so fortunate as to have citizens Lebas and Saint-Just within our walls."

"Get along with your citizens Lebas and Saint-Just! and take this young man to the Hôtel de la Lanterne."

And, without paying further heed to the advice of citizen Coclès, the conductor entered the Hôtel de la Poste.

The man with the torch followed the conductor with his eyes, muttering to himself; then he turned to the boy: "Come on, citizen Charles," he said. And he went on ahead to show the way.

Strasbourg, even at its best, was never a gay, lively town, especially after the tattoo had been beaten for two hours; but it was duller than ever at the time when our story opens; that is to say, during the early part of the month of December, 1793. The Austro-Prussian army was literally at the gates of the city. Pichegru, general-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine, after gathering together all the scattered forces at his command, had, by force of will and his own example, restored discipline and resumed the offensive on the 18th Frimaire, three days before; organizing a war of skirmishing and sharpshooting, since he was powerless to offer battle. He had succeeded Houchard and Custine, who had been guillotined because they had met with reverses, and Alexandre de Beauharnais, who was also in danger of being guillotined.

Furthermore, Saint-Just and Lebas were there, not only commanding Pichegru to conquer, but decreeing the victory. The guillotine followed them, charged with executing their decrees the instant they were made.

And three decrees had been issued that very day.

The first one ordered the gates of Strasbourg to be closed at three o'clock in the afternoon; anyone who delayed their closing, if only for five minutes, did so under pain of death.

The second decree forbade any one to flee before the enemy. The rider who put his horse to a gallop, or the foot-soldier who retreated faster than a walk, when turning his back on the enemy on the field of battle, thereby incurred the penalty of death.

The third decree, which was due to fear of being surprised by the enemy, forbade any soldier to remove his clothing at night. Any soldier who disobeyed this order, no matter what his rank, was condemned to death.

The boy who had just entered the city was destined to see each of these three decrees carried into effect within six days after his arrival in the city.

As we have said, all these circumstances, added to the news which had just arrived from Paris, increased the natural gloominess of the city.

This news told of the deaths of the queen, the Duc d'Orléans, Madame Roland, and Bailly.

There was talk of the speedy recapture of Toulon from the English, but this was as yet a mere rumor.

Neither was the hour liable to make Strasbourg appear to advantage in the new-comer's eyes. After nine o'clock in the evening the dark, narrow streets were wholly given up to the patrol of the civic guard and of the company of the Propagande, who were watching over the public welfare.

Nothing, in fact, could be more depressing and mournful to a traveller newly arrived from a town which is neither in a state of war nor on the frontier than the sound of the nocturnal tramp of an organized body, stopping suddenly at an order given in a muffled tone, and accompanied by the clashing of arms and the exchange of the password each time two squads met.

Two or three of these patrols had already passed our young traveller and his guide, when they met another, which brought them to a halt with the challenging, "Who goes there?"

In Strasbourg there were three different ways of replying to this challenge, which indicated in a sufficiently characteristic way the varying opinions. The indifferent ones replied, "Friends!" The moderates, "Citizens!" The fanatics, "Sans Culottes!"

"Sans Culottes!" Coclès energetically answered the guard.

"Advance and give the watchword!" cried an imperious voice.

"Ah, good!" said Coclès, "I recognize that voice; it belongs to citizen Tétrell. Leave this to me."

"Who is citizen Tétrell?" asked the boy.

"The friend of the people, the terror of the aristocrats, an out-and-outer." Then, advancing like a man who has nothing to fear, he said: "It is I, citizen Tétrell!"

"Ah! you know me," said the leader of the patrol, a giant of five feet ten, who reached something like a height of seven feet with his hat and the plume which surmounted it.

"Indeed I do," exclaimed Coclès. "Who does not know citizen Tétrell in Strasbourg?" Then, approaching the colossus, he added: "Good-evening, citizen Tétrell."

"It's all very well for you to know me," said the giant, "but I don't know you."

"Oh, yes you do! I am citizen Coclès, who was called Sleepy-head in the days of the tyrant; it was you yourself who baptized me with the name when your horses and dogs were at the Hôtel de la Lanterne. Sleepy-head! What, you don't remember Sleepy-head?"

"Why, of course I do; I called you that because you were the laziest rascal I ever knew. And who is this young fellow?"

"He," said Coclès, raising his torch to the level of the boy's face—"he is a little chap whom his father has sent to Euloge

Schneider to learn Greek."

"And who is your father, my little friend?" asked Tétrell.

"He is president of the tribunal at Besançon, citizen," replied the lad.

"But one must know Latin to learn Greek."

The boy drew himself up and said: "I do know it."

"What, you know it?"

"Yes, when I was at Besançon my father and I never spoke anything but Latin."

"The devil! You seem to be pretty well advanced for one of your age. How old are you? Eleven or twelve?"

"I am almost fourteen."

"And what made your father send you to Euloge Schneider to learn Greek?"

"Because my father does not know Greek as well as he does Latin. He taught me all he knew, then he sent me to Euloge Schneider, who speaks Greek fluently, having occupied the chair of Greek at Bonn. See, this is the letter my father gave me for him. Besides, he wrote him a week ago, informing him that I would arrive this evening, and it was he who ordered my room to be made ready at the Hôtel de la Lanterne, and sent citizen Coclès to fetch me."

As he spoke the boy handed citizen Tétrell the letter, to prove that he had told him nothing but the truth.

"Come, Sleepy-head, bring your light nearer," said Tétrell.

"Coclès, Coclès," insisted the groom, obeying his former friend's order nevertheless.

"My young friend," said Tétrell, "may I call your attention to the fact that this letter is not addressed to citizen Schneider but to citizen Pichegru?"

"Ah! I beg pardon, I made a mistake; my father gave me two letters and I have handed you the wrong one." Then, taking back the first letter, he gave him a second.

"Ah! this time we are right," said Tétrell. "To the citizen Euloge Schneider."

"Éloge Schneider," repeated Coclès, correcting in his own way the first name of the public prosecutor, which he thought Tétrell had mispronounced.

"Give your guide a lesson in Greek," laughed the leader of the patrol, "and tell him that the name Euloge means—come, my lad, what does it mean?"

"A fine speaker," replied the boy.

"Well answered, upon my word! do you hear, Sleepy-head?"

"Coclès," repeated the groom, obstinately, more difficult to convince regarding his own name than concerning that of the public prosecutor.

In the meantime Tétrell had drawn the boy aside, and, bending down until he could whisper in his ear, he said: "Are you going to the Hôtel de la Lanterne?"

"Yes, citizen," replied the child.

"You will find two of your compatriots there, who have come here to defend and reclaim the adjutant-general, Charles Perrin, who is accused of treason."

"Yes, citizens Dumont and Ballu."

"That's right. Well, tell them that not only have they nothing to hope for their client, but their stay here bodes them no good. It is merely a question of their heads. Do you understand?"

"No, I do not understand," replied the boy.

"What! don't you understand that Saint-Just will have their heads cut off like two chickens if they remain? Advise them to go, and the sooner the better."

"Shall I tell them that you said so?"

"No, indeed! For them to make me pay for the broken pots, or, rather, for the pots that are not broken." Then, straightening up, he cried: "Very well, you are good citizens, go your way. Come, march, you others!"

And citizen Tétrell went off at the head of his patrol, leaving Coclès very proud of having talked for ten minutes with a man of such importance, and citizen Charles much disturbed by the confidence which had just been reposed in him. Both continued their way in silence.

The weather was dark and gloomy, as it is apt to be in December in the north and east of France; and although the moon was nearly at its full, great black clouds swept across its face like equinoctial waves. To reach the Hôtel de la Lanterne, which was in the street formerly called the Rue de l'Archévêque, and was now known as the Rue de la Déesse Raison, they had to cross the market square, at the extremity of which rose a huge scaffolding, against which the boy, in his abstraction, almost stumbled.

"Take care, citizen Charles," said the groom, laughing, "you will knock down the guillotine."

The boy gave a cry and drew back in terror. Just then the moon shone out brilliantly for a few seconds. For an instant the horrible instrument was visible and a pale, sad ray quivered upon its blade.

"My God! do they use it?" asked the boy, ingenuously, drawing closer to the groom.

"What! do they use it?" the latter replied, gayly; "I should think so, and every day at that. It was Mother Raisin's turn to-day. In spite of her eighty years she ended her life there. It didn't do her any good to tell the executioner: 'It's not worth while killing me, my son; wait a bit and I'll die by myself.' She was slivered like the rest."

"What had the poor woman done?"

"She gave a bit of bread to a starving Austrian. She said that he had asked her in German and so she thought he was a compatriot, but it was no use. They replied that since the time of I don't know what tyrant, the Alsatians and the Austrians were not compatriots."

The poor child, who had left home for the first time, and who had never experienced so many varying emotions in the course of one evening, suddenly felt cold. Was it the effect of the weather or of Coclès' story? Whatever it was he threw a final glance at the instrument, which, as the moonbeams faded, retreated into the night like a shadow, and then asked, with chattering teeth: "Are we far from the Lanterne?"

"Faith, no; for here it is," replied Coclès, pointing to an enormous lantern hanging over the doorway, which lighted the street for twenty feet around it.

"It's time," said the boy, with a shiver.

And, running the rest of the way, he opened the door of the hotel and darted into the kitchen, where a great fire burning in an immense chimney-piece drew forth a cry of satisfaction from him. Madame Teutch answered the exclamation with a similar one, for, although she had never seen him, she recognized in him the young boy who had been recommended to her care, as she saw Coclès appear in turn on the threshold with his light.

CHAPTER II

THE CITIZENESS TEUTCH

The citizeness Teutch, a fresh, fat Alsatian, thirty or thirty-five years of age, felt an affection almost maternal for the travellers Providence sent her—an affection which was doubly strong when the travellers were as young and pretty as was the boy now sitting beside the kitchen fire, where, for that matter, he was the only one. So, hastening toward him, and as he still shivered, holding out his hands and feet to the blaze, she said: "Oh, the dear little fellow! What makes him shiver so, and why is he so pale?"

"Hang it, citizeness," said Coclès, with his hoarse laugh, "I can't tell you exactly; but I think he shivers because he is cold, and that he is pale because he nearly fell over the guillotine. He wasn't acquainted with the machine, and it seems to have had quite an effect upon him. What fools children are!"

"Be quiet, you idiot!"

"Thanks, citizeness; that's my *pourboire*, I suppose."

"No, my friend," said Charles, drawing a little purse from his pocket and handing him a small coin, "here is your *pourboire*."

"Thanks, citizen," said Coclès, lifting his hat with one hand and holding out the other for the money. "The deuce! white money; so there is still some left in France? I thought that it was all done for; but now I see, as citizen Tétrell says, that that is just a report started by the aristocrats."

"Come, get along to your horses," said citizeness Teutch, "and leave us alone."

Coclès went out grumbling. Madame Teutch sat down, and, in spite of some slight opposition on the part of Charles, she took him on her knee. Although, as we have said, he was nearly fourteen years old, he did not look more than ten or eleven.

"See here, my little friend," said she, "what I am going to tell you now is for your own good. If you have any silver, you must not show it. Have it changed for paper money; paper money having a forced currency, and a gold louis being worth five hundred francs in assignats, you will not lose anything, and will not risk being suspected as an aristocrat." Then, changing the subject, she said: "How cold his hands are, the poor little fellow."

And she held his hands out to the fire, as if he had been a child.

"And now what shall we do next?" she said. "A little supper?"

"Oh, as for that, madame, no, thank you; we dined at Erstein, and I am not at all hungry. I would rather go to bed, for I don't think I can get quite warm until I am in my bed."

"Very well; then we will warm your bed; and when you are in it we will give you a good cup of—what? Milk or broth?"

"Milk, if you please."

"Milk, then. Poor child, you were only a nursling yesterday, and here you are running about alone like a grown man. Ah! these are sad times!"

And she picked Charles up as if he had been a baby indeed. Placing him in a chair she went to the keyboard to see what room she could give him.

"Let's see! 5, that's it. No! the room is too large and the window doesn't shut tight; the poor child would be cold. 9! No, that is a room with two beds. 14! That will suit him; a nice little room with a good bed hung with curtains to keep out the draughts, and a pretty little fireplace that does not smoke, with an infant Jesus over it; that will bring him good luck. Gretchen! Gretchen!"

A beautiful Alsatian, about twenty years old, dressed in the graceful costume of the country, which resembles somewhat that worn by the women of Arles, came quickly at this summons.

"What is it, mistress?" she asked in German.

"I want you to get No. 14 ready for this little cherub; choose some fine dry sheets while I go and get him some milk

porridge."

Gretchen lighted a candle and started on her errand. Then citizeness Teutch returned to Charles.

"Do you understand German?" she asked.

"No, madame; but if I stay long in Strasbourg, as I expect to, I hope to learn it."

"Do you know why I gave you No. 14?"

"Yes, I heard what you were saying in your monologue."

"Goodness gracious! my monologue. What's that?"

"That, madame, is not a French word. It is derived from two Greek words—*monos*, which means alone, and *logos*, which signifies to speak."

"My dear child, do you know Greek at your age?"

"A little, madame. I have come to Strasbourg to learn more."

"You have come to Strasbourg to learn Greek?"

"Yes, with M. Euloge Schneider."

Madame Teutch shook her head.

"Oh, madame! he knows Greek as well as Demosthenes," said Charles, thinking that Madame Teutch doubted his future professor's knowledge.

"I don't say he doesn't. But I do say, that no matter how well he knows it, he won't have time to teach you."

"Why, what does he do?"

"You ask me that?"

"Certainly, I ask you."

"He cuts off heads," she said, lowering her voice.

Charles trembled. "He—cuts—off—heads?" he repeated.

"Didn't you know that he is the public prosecutor? Ah! my poor child, your father has selected a strange master for you."

The boy remained thoughtful for an instant. Then he asked: "Was it he who cut off Mother Raisin's head to-day?"

"No, that was the Propagande."

"What is the Propagande?"

"A society for the propagation of revolutionary ideas. Each one cuts off heads on his own account: Citizen Schneider as public prosecutor, Saint-Just as the people's representative, and Tétrell as the leader of the Propagande."

"One guillotine is not much for so many people," observed the boy, with a smile which was beyond his years.

"But each one has his own!"

"Surely, my father did not know that when he sent me here," murmured the boy. He reflected an instant; then, with a firmness that indicated precocious courage, he added: "Well! since I am here I shall remain." Then, passing to another train of thought, he said: "You remarked, Madame Teutch, that you had given me No. 14 because it was a small room, and the bed had curtains, and the chimney did not smoke."

"And for still another reason, my pretty boy."

"What is it?"

"Because you will find a young companion in No. 15, just a trifle older than you, whom you may be able to divert."

"Is he sad?"

"Oh! very sad. He is only fifteen, but he is already a little man. He is here on a sorrowful errand. His father, who was general-in-chief of the army of the Rhine before Pichegru, has been accused of treason. Just think, he lodged here, the

poor dear man! From all that I can gather he is no more guilty than you or I; but he is a ci-devant, and you know they don't trust them. Well, as I was saying, this young man is here for the purpose of copying documents which may prove his father's innocence. He is a good son, as you see, and he works at his task from morning till night."

"Then I can help him," said Charles; "I write a good hand."

"Now, that's what I call a good friend," and in her enthusiasm, Madame Teutch embraced her guest.

"What is his name?" asked Charles.

"Citizen Eugene."

"But Eugene is only his first name."

"Why, of course, and he has another name, a very funny name. Wait, his father was Marquis—wait—"

"I am waiting, Madame Teutch, I am waiting," said the boy with a laugh.

"That's only a manner of speaking: you know very well what I mean—a name like what they put on the backs of horses. Harness—Beauharnais; that's it! Eugene de Beauharnais. But I guess that it's on account of that *de* that they call him plain citizen Eugene."

This conversation reminded the boy of what Tétrell had told him. "By the way, Madame Teutch," he said, "you must have two commissioners from Besançon in your house."

"Yes, they came to reclaim your compatriot, the adjutant-general Perrin."

"Will they give him to them?"

"Oh! he has done better than wait for the decision of Saint-Just."

"What has he done?"

"He escaped last night."

"And he hasn't been caught again?"

"No, not yet."

"I am glad of that. He was a friend of my father's, and I was very fond of him also."

"Don't boast of that here."

"And what about my two compatriots?"

"Messieurs Ballu and Dumont?"

"Yes, why did they stay, since the man they came to rescue has escaped?"

"He is to be tried for contumacy, and they expect to defend him in his absence as they would have done had he been here."

"Ah!" murmured the child, "now I understand citizen Tétrell's advice." Then he said aloud: "Can I see them to-night?"

"Who?"

"Citizens Dumont and Ballu."

"Certainly you can see them if you wish to wait, but they have gone to the club called the 'Rights of Man,' and will not be home until two in the morning."

"I can't wait for them, I am too tired," replied the boy. "But you can give them a note from me when they come in, can't you?"

"Of course."

"To them alone, into their own hands?"

"To them alone, into their own hands."

"Where can I write it?"

"In the office, if you are warm now."

"I am."

Madame Teutch took a lamp from the table and carried it to a desk placed in a little closet similar to the ones used in aviaries. The boy followed her. There, upon a slip of paper bearing the stamp of the hotel, he wrote as follows: "A fellow-countryman, who knows on good authority that you are in immediate danger of being arrested, begs you to leave for Besançon at once."

Then he folded the note, sealed it and handed it to Madame Teutch.

"But you have not signed it!" exclaimed the hostess.

"That is not necessary. You can tell them who sent it."

"I won't fail to do so."

"If they are still here to-morrow morning, don't let them go until I have seen them."

"Don't worry."

"There! that's finished," said Gretchen, coming in with a clatter of sabots.

"Is the bed made?" asked Madame Teutch.

"Yes, mistress," replied Gretchen.

"And the fire lighted?"

"Yes."

"Then heat the warming-pan and show citizen Charles to his room. I am going to make his porridge."

Citizen Charles was so tired that he followed Gretchen and the warming-pan without a word. Ten minutes after he was in bed Madame Teutch entered his room with the milk porridge in her hand. She forced Charles, who was already half asleep, to drink it, gave him a little tap on each cheek, tucked in the sheets in a maternal fashion, bade him good-night, and went out carrying the light with her.

But the wishes of good Madame Teutch were only granted in part, for at six o'clock in the morning all the guests in the Hôtel de la Lanterne were awakened by the sound of voices and arms; the butt-ends of muskets clashed noisily upon the ground, while hasty steps ran through the corridors and doors were opened and shut with a bang.

The noise awakened Charles and he sat up in bed.

At the same moment his room was filled with light and noise. Members of the police force, accompanied by gendarmes, filed in, pulled the boy roughly out of bed, asked his name, his business in Strasbourg, and how long he had been there; searched under the bed, looked in the chimney-piece, fumbled in the closet, and went out as suddenly as they had come in, leaving the boy standing in the middle of the room, half naked and wholly bewildered.

It was evident that this was one of the domiciliary visits so common at that time, but that the new arrival was not the object of it. The latter therefore decided that the best thing he could do would be to go back to bed, after shutting the door that led into the corridor, and to sleep again if that were possible.

This resolution taken and carried out, he had scarcely drawn up the sheets, when the door opened to give entrance to Madame Teutch, coquettishly clad in a white nightgown, and carrying a lighted candle in her hand. She stepped softly, and opened the door without any noise, making a sign as she did so to Charles—who was leaning on his elbow looking at her with the utmost astonishment—not to speak. He, already impressed with the dangers of the life that had opened to him the night before, obeyed her and remained silent.

Citizeness Teutch closed the door leading to the corridor behind her with the utmost care, then, placing her candle on the chimney-piece, she took a chair, and, still with the same precautions, seated herself beside the boy's bed.

"Well, my little friend," she said, "I suppose you were very much frightened?"

"Not very much, madame," replied Charles, "for I knew the men were not seeking me."

"Nevertheless, it was high time that you warned your compatriots."

"Then the men were looking for them?"

"Themselves! Fortunately they came in about two o'clock, and I gave them your note. They read it over twice, then they asked me who had written it, and I told them that it was you, and who you were. After that they consulted together for a few moments, and finally said: 'Well, well, we must be off!' And they immediately set to work to pack their trunks, and sent Sleepy-head to take places for them in the Besançon diligence. Fortunately there were two left, so they started at five o'clock this morning; indeed, to make sure that they should not lose their places, they left here at four. They had been on their way to Besançon over an hour when the guards knocked on the door in the name of the law. But, just think, they were stupid enough to lose the note you wrote them, and the police have found it."

"Oh! that makes no difference; it was not signed."

"Yes, but as it was written on the stamped hotel paper they came back to ask me who had written it."

"The devil!"

"Of course you understand that I would rather tear out my heart than tell them. Poor dear, they would have taken you away. I said that when travellers asked for paper we sent it up to their rooms, and as there were some sixty travellers in the house, it would be impossible for me to know who had written it. They threatened to arrest me, and I told them I was quite ready to follow them, but that that would do them no good, as it was not I whom citizen Saint-Just had bade them arrest. They recognized the truth of my argument, and went away saying, 'Very well, very well, some day!' I answered, 'Search!' and they are searching! Only I came to warn you and to advise you to deny everything like the devil himself, when they question you, if you are accused."

"When we get to that point I shall see what to do; in the meantime, thank you very much, Madame Teutch."

"Ah! and a last bit of advice, my little dear. When we are alone call me Madame Teutch as much as you please, but before people do not fail to call me Citizeness Teutch. I do not say that Sleepy-head would be capable of treachery; but he is a fanatic, and when fools are fanatics I never trust them."

And with this axiom, which indicated at once her prudence and perspicacity, Madame Teutch rose, extinguished the candle, which was still burning on the chimney-piece, although the dawn had come while she was there, and went out.



CHAPTER III

EULOGUE SCHNEIDER

Charles, before leaving Besançon, had learned all that he could concerning his future preceptor, Euloge Schneider, and his habits. He knew that he rose every morning at six o'clock, worked until eight, breakfasted at that hour, smoked a pipe, and resumed work until he went out, which was at one or two o'clock.

He therefore judged it expedient not to go to sleep again. Daybreak is late in Strasbourg in the month of December, and the narrow streets keep the light from the ground floors. It must be about seven. Supposing that it took him an hour to dress and to go to M. Schneider's house, he would arrive there just about breakfast time. He finished an elegant toilet just as Madame Teutch entered.

"Lord!" she cried, "are you going to a wedding?"

"No," replied the boy, "I am going to see M. Schneider."

"What are you thinking of, my dear child! You look like an aristocrat. If you were eighteen years old instead of thirteen, they would cut off your head on account of your appearance. Away with your fine clothes, and bring out your travelling suit of yesterday; it is good enough for the Monk of Cologne."

And citizeness Teutch, with a few dexterous movements, soon had her lodger clothed in his other garments. He let her do it, marvelling at her quickness and blushing a little at the contact of her plump hand, whose whiteness betrayed her innate coquetry.

"There, now go and see your man," she said; "but be careful to call him citizen, or else, no matter how well you are recommended, you will come to grief."

The boy thanked her for her good counsel, and asked her if she had any other advice to give him.

"No," she said, shaking her head, "except to come back as soon as possible, for I am going to prepare a little breakfast for you and your neighbor in No. 15, the equal of which he has never eaten, aristocrat as he is. And now go!"

With the adorable instinct of maternity which exists in the hearts of all women, Madame Teutch had conceived a tender affection for her new guest, and took upon herself the direction of his conduct. He on his side, young as he was and feeling the need of that gentle affection which makes life easier for all, was willing to follow her instruction, as he would have obeyed the commands of a mother.

He therefore let her kiss him on both cheeks, and, after inquiring the way to Euloge Schneider's house, left the Hôtel de la Lanterne to take the first step in the wide world, as the Germans say—that first step upon which the whole future life often depends.

He passed the cathedral; but as he was not looking about him, he came near receiving his death-blow. A saint's head fell at his feet, and was almost immediately followed by a statue of the Virgin embracing her Son.

He turned in the direction whence the double missile had come, and perceived a man, hammer in hand, astride the shoulders of a colossal apostle, who was making havoc with the saints, the first fruits of which labor had fallen at the boy's feet. A dozen men were laughing and approving this desecration.

The boy crossed the Breuil, stopped before a modest little house, went up a few steps, and rang the bell.

A crabbed old servant opened the door and subjected him to a severe cross-examination. When he had replied satisfactorily to all her questions, she grumblingly admitted him to the dining-room, saying: "Wait there. Citizen Schneider is coming to breakfast, and you can talk to him then, since you say you have something to tell him."

When Charles was left alone, he cast a rapid glance around the room. It was very plain, being ceiled with wood and having for sole ornament two crossed sabres.

And then the terrible judge-advocate of the Revolutionary Commission of the Lower Rhine entered behind the old woman.

He passed near the boy without seeing him, or at least without appearing to notice him, and seated himself at the table, where he bravely attacked a pyramid of oysters, flanked by a dish of anchovies and a bowl of olives.

Let us profit by this pause to sketch in a few lines the physical and moral portrait of the strange and terrible man whose acquaintance Charles was about to make.

Jean-Georges Schneider, who had either given himself or had been endowed with the name of Euloge, was a man of thirty-seven or eight years of age, ugly, fat, short, common, with round limbs, round shoulders, and a round head. The most striking thing about his strange appearance was that he had his hair cut short, while he let his enormous eyebrows grow as long and as thick as they pleased. These eyebrows, bushy, black and tufted, shadowed yellow eyes, bordered with red rims.

He had begun by being a monk, hence his surname of the Monk of Cologne, which his name of Euloge had not been able to efface. Born in Franconia, of poor laboring parents, he had by his talents won the patronage of the village priest in his childhood, and the latter had taught him the elements of Latin. His rapid progress enabled him to go to the Jesuit college at Wurzburg. He was expelled from the illustrious society on account of misconduct, sank to the depths of misery, and finally entered a convent of Franciscans at Bamberg.

His studies finished, he was thought competent to become professor of Hebrew, and was sent to Augsburg. Called, in 1786, to the court of Duke Charles of Wurtemberg as chaplain, he preached there with success, and devoted three-fourths of the revenues which accrued to him to the support of his family. It is said that it was here that he joined the sect of the Illuminated, organized by the famous Weishaupt, which explains the ardor with which he adopted the principles of the French Revolution. At that time, full of ambition, impatient under restraint, and devoured by ardent passions, he published a catechism which was so liberal that he was obliged to cross the Rhine and establish himself at Strasbourg, where, on the 27th of June, 1791, he was appointed episcopal vicar and dean of the theological faculty; then, far from refusing the civic oath, he not only took it, but preached in the cathedral, mingling together comments on political incidents and religious teachings with singular zeal.

Before the 10th of August, he demanded the abdication of Louis XVI., the while protesting against being styled a Republican. From that moment he fought with desperate courage against the royalist party, which had in Strasbourg, as well as in the neighboring provinces, many powerful adherents. This struggle earned him, toward the end of 1792, the post of mayor of Haguenau.

Finally he was appointed to the post of public accuser of the Lower Rhine on the 19th of February, and was invested on the 5th of the following May with the title of Commissioner of the Revolutionary Tribunal of Strasbourg. Then it was that the terrible thirst for blood, to which his natural violence drove him, burst forth. Urged on by feverish excitement, when he was not needed at Strasbourg, he went about the neighborhood with his terrible escort, followed by the executioner and the guillotine.

Then, upon the slightest pretext, he stopped at towns which had hoped never to see his fatal instrument, set up the guillotine, established a tribunal, tried, judged, and executed. In the midst of this bloody orgy he brought the paper money up to par, money that had hitherto been worth only eighty-five per cent. He also, by his own unaided efforts, procured more grain for the army, which was in need of almost everything, than all the other commissioners in the district put together. And finally, from the 5th of November to the 11th of December, he had sent at least thirty-one persons to their death in Strasbourg, Mutzig, Barr, Obernai, Epfig, and Schlestadt.

Although our young friend was ignorant of most of these things, and especially of the latter, it was not without a feeling of genuine terror that he found himself in the presence of the formidable pro-consul. But, reflecting that he, unlike the others, had a protector in the man by whom so many were menaced, he soon regained his composure, and after seeking how best to open the conversation, he thought he had found a way in the oysters that Schneider was eating.

"*Rara concha in terra*," he said, in his clear, flute-like voice, smiling as he spoke.

Euloge turned his head. "Do you mean to insinuate that I am an aristocrat, baby?" he asked.

"I do not mean to say anything at all, citizen Schneider; but I know you are a scholar, and I wanted to attract your attention to a poor little boy like me, and I thought to do it by quoting a language that is familiar to you, and a saying from an author whom you like."

"Faith, that is well said!"

"Recommended to Euloge much more than to the citizen Schneider, I ought to speak as well as possible in order to be worthy of the recommendation."

"And who recommended you?" asked Euloge, wheeling his chair so as to face the boy.

"My father. Here is his letter."

Euloge took the letter and recognized the handwriting.

"Ah, ha! an old friend." He read it from one end to the other; then he said, "Your father certainly writes the purest Latin of any one living." Then, holding out his hand to the boy, he asked, "Will you breakfast with me?"

Charles glanced at the table, and his face probably betrayed his lack of appreciation of a fare at once so luxurious and so frugal.

"No, I understand," laughed Schneider; "a young stomach like yours needs something more solid than anchovies and olives. Come to dinner; I dine to-day informally with three friends. If your father were here he would make the fourth, and you shall take his place. Will you have a glass of beer to drink your father's health?"

"Oh! with pleasure," cried the boy, taking the glass and clinking it against that of the scholar. But as it was an enormous one, he could only drink half.

"Well?" asked Schneider.

"We can drink the rest a little later to the welfare of the Republic," answered the boy; "but the glass is too big for me to empty at a single draught."

Schneider looked at him with something akin to tenderness. "Faith! he is very nice," he observed. Then, as the old servant brought in the French and German papers at that moment, he asked: "Do you know German?"

"Not a word."

"Very well; then I will teach you."

"With the Greek?"

"With the Greek. So you are ambitious to learn Greek?"

"It is my only wish."

"We will try to satisfy it. Here is the 'Moniteur Français'; read it while I look over the 'Vienna Gazette.'"

There was a moment's silence as they both began to read.

"Oh, oh!" said Euloge, as he read. "'At this hour Strasbourg will have been taken, and our victorious troops are probably on the march to Paris.' They are reckoning without Pichegru, Saint-Just, and myself."

"We are masters of the advanced works of Toulon," said Charles, also reading; "and before three or four days will have passed we shall be masters of the entire town, and the Republic will be avenged."

"What is the date of your 'Moniteur'?" asked Euloge.

"The 8th," replied the child.

"Does it say anything else?"

"In the session of the 6th, Robespierre read a reply to the manifesto of the Allied Powers. The Convention ordered it to be printed and translated into every language."

"Go on," said Schneider. The child continued:

"The 7th, Billaud-Varennes reported that the rebels of the Vendée, having made an attempt upon the city of Angers, were beaten and driven away by the garrison, with whom the inhabitants had united."

"Long live the Republic!" cried Schneider.

"Madame Dubarry, condemned to death the 7th, was executed the same day, with the banker Van Deniver, her lover. The old prostitute completely lost her head before the executioner cut it off. She wept and struggled, and called for help; but the people replied to her appeals with hoots and maledictions. They remembered the extravagances of which she and such as she had been the cause, and the public misery that had resulted."

"The infamous creature!" said Schneider. "After having dishonored the throne, nothing must do but she must dishonor the

scaffold also."

Just then two soldiers entered, whose uniforms, though familiar to Schneider, made Charles shiver in spite of himself. They were dressed in black, with two crossbones above the tri-color cockade on their caps. White braid on their black cloaks and jackets gave the effect of the ribs of a skeleton; and their sabre-taches were ornamented with a skull and crossbones. They belonged to the regiment of "Hussars of Death," in which no one enlisted without having first vowed not to be made a prisoner. A dozen soldiers from this regiment formed Schneider's bodyguard, and served him as messengers. When he saw these men, Schneider rose.

"Now," said he to the young boy, "you can stay or go as you please. I must go and send off my couriers. Only do not forget that we dine at two o'clock, and that you dine with us."

Then, bowing slightly to Charles, he entered his study with his escort.

The offer to remain did not appear to be particularly attractive to the boy. He rose as Schneider left the room, and waited until he had entered his study, and the door had shut upon the two sinister guards who accompanied him. Then, seizing his cap, he darted from the room, sprang down the three steps at the entrance, and, running all the way, reached good Madame Teutch's kitchen, shouting: "I am almost starved! Here I am!"



CHAPTER IV

EUGENE DE BEAUHARNAIS

At the call of her "little Charles" as she called him, Madame Teutch came out of a little dining-room which opened upon the courtyard and entered the kitchen. "Ah, there you are, thank God!" she cried. "Then the ogre did not eat you, poor little Tom Thumb!"

"He was charming, on the contrary; and I don't believe that his teeth are as long as they say."

"God grant that you never feel them! But if I heard right, yours are the long ones. Come in here, and I will go call your future friend, who is working as usual, poor child!"

And the citizeness Teutch ran upstairs with a youthfulness which indicated an excess of exuberant force.

In the meantime Charles examined the preparations for one of the most appetizing breakfasts that had ever been placed before him. He was diverted from his occupation by the sound of the door opening. It admitted the youth of whom the citizeness Teutch had spoken. He was a lad of fifteen, with black eyes and curly black hair which fell over his shoulders. His attire was elegant, and his linen of unusual whiteness. In spite of the efforts that had evidently been made to disguise it, everything in him betrayed the aristocrat. He approached Charles smilingly and held out his hand to him.

"Our good hostess tells me, citizen," he said, "that I am to have the pleasure of spending some time with you; and she added that you had promised to like me a little. I am very glad of that, for I am sure I shall become very much attached to you."

"And I, too," cried Charles, "with all my heart."

"Bravo, bravo!" cried Madame Teutch, coming in at this juncture. "And now that you have greeted each other like two gentlemen—a very dangerous thing to do in these days—embrace each other like two comrades."

"I ask nothing better," said Eugene; and Charles sprang into his arms.

The two boys embraced with the cordiality and frankness of youth.

"Now," continued the elder of the two, "I know that your name is Charles; mine is Eugene. I hope that since we know each other's name there will be no more monsieur or citizen between us. Shall I set you the example? Will you come to table, my dear Charles? I am dying of hunger and I heard Madame Teutch say that you also had a good appetite."

"Heigho!" said Madame Teutch, "how well that was said, my little Charles. These aristocrats, these aristocrats, they know what is right!"

"Do not say such things, my dear Madame Teuton," said Eugene, laughing; "a worthy inn like yours should lodge nothing but sans-culottes."

"In that case I should have to forget that I had the honor of lodging your worthy father, Monsieur Eugene; and, God knows, I pray night and morning for him."

"You may pray for my mother at the same time, good Madame Teutch," said the youth, wiping away a tear, "for my sister Hortense writes me that she has been arrested and confined in the prison of the Carmelites. I received the letter, this morning."

"My poor friend," said Charles.

"How old is your sister?" asked Madame Teutch.

"Ten."

"Poor child! send for her to come to you at once; and we will take care of her. She can't stay alone in Paris."

"Thanks, Madame Teutch, thanks; but fortunately she is not alone. She is with my grandmother at our Château de la Ferté-Beauharnais. But here I have made you all sad, and I had resolved to keep this news to myself."

"Monsieur Eugene," said Charles, "when one has such notions one does not ask for people's friendship. Now, to punish you, you are to talk of nothing but your father and your mother and sister during all the breakfast."

The two boys sat down at table, Madame Teutch remaining to serve them. The task imposed on Eugene was an easy one for him. He told his young friend that he was the last descendant of a noble family of Orléanais; that one of his ancestors, Guillaume de Beauharnais, had married Marguerite de Bourges in 1398; that another, Jean de Beauharnais, had been a witness at the trial of La Pucelle (Joan of Arc); that in 1764 their estate of la Ferté-Aurain had been elevated to a marquisate under the name of la Ferté-Beauharnais; that his uncle François had emigrated in 1790, had become a major in the army of Condé, and had offered himself to the president of the Convention to defend the king. As for his father, who was at the present time under arrest on charge of conspiracy with the enemy, he had been born at Martinique, and there had married Mademoiselle Tascher de la Pagerie, and had brought her to France, where they had been received at court.

Elected to the States-General by the jurisdiction of Blois, he had, on the night of the 4th of August, been one of the first to favor the suppression of titles and privileges. Elected a secretary of the National Assembly, and a member of the military commission, he had, during the preparation of the Federation, worked eagerly at the levelling of the Champ de Mars, harnessed to the same cart as the Abbé Sièyes. Finally he had been detailed to the Army of the North as adjutant-general; he had commanded the camp of Soissons, refused the Ministry of War, and accepted the fatal command of the Army of the Rhine. The rest is known.

But it was when he spoke of the beauty, goodness, and grace of his mother that the youth was most eloquent; and he declared that he would now work all the more eagerly for the Marquis de Beauharnais, because in so doing he was also working for his good mother, Josephine.

Charles, who felt a deep affection for his own parents, found infinite delight in listening to his young companion, and did not tire of asking him about his mother and sister. But in the midst of this conversation, a dull report shook the window-panes of the hotel, and was immediately followed by others.

"The cannon! the cannon!" cried Eugene, who was more accustomed to the sounds of war than his young companion. And leaping from his chair, he cried: "Alarm! alarm! the city is attacked!" Just then they heard the beating of drums in several directions.

The two youths ran to the door, where Madame Teutch had preceded them. There were already signs of great disturbance in the streets. Riders, dressed in different uniforms, crossed each other in all directions, probably carrying orders, while the townsfolk, armed with pikes, sabres, and pistols, were rushing toward the Haguenau gate, crying: "Patriots, to arms! the enemy is upon us!"

From moment to moment came the dull roar of the cannon, signalling better than the human voice could have done that the city was in danger, and its inhabitants had need to defend it.

"Come to the ramparts, Charles!" said Eugene, darting out into the street; "and if we can't fight ourselves, we can at least watch the battle."

Charles caught his enthusiasm and followed his companion, who, more familiar than himself with the topography of the city, led him by the shortest way to the Haguenau gate. As they passed a gunsmith's shop, Eugene paused.

"Wait," said he, "I have an idea." He entered the shop, and asked the master, "Have you a good rifle?"

"Yes," replied the latter, "but it is dear."

"How much?"

"Two hundred livres."

The youth drew a handful of paper money from his pocket and threw it on the counter.

"Have you ball and powder?"

"Yes."

"Give me some."

The gunsmith chose twenty balls that fitted the rifle, and weighed out a pound of powder which he put in a powder-flask, while Eugene counted out the two hundred livres in assignats, and six more for the powder and ball.

"Do you know how to use a gun," Eugene asked Charles.

"Alas! no," replied the boy, ashamed of his ignorance.

"Never mind," said Eugene, laughing, "I will fight for us both." And he hastened on toward the threatened spot, loading his rifle as he went.

For the rest, it was curious to see how every one, no matter what his opinion, seemed fairly to spring upon the foe. From each gate came armed men; the magic cry, "The enemy! the enemy!" seemed to evoke defenders on the spot.

Near the gate the crowd was so dense that Eugene saw he could never gain the rampart except by making a detour. He hastened to the right and soon found himself on that part of the rampart which was opposite Schiltigheim.

A great number of patriots were gathered here discharging their guns. Eugene had much difficulty in making his way to the front, but at last he succeeded, and Charles followed him.

The road and the plain presented the appearance of a battlefield in the greatest confusion. French and Austrians were fighting pell-mell with indescribable fury. The enemy, in pursuit of a French corps which had been seized with one of those unaccountable panics which the ancients attributed to the fury of the gods, had almost succeeded in forcing an entrance into the city with the fleeing Frenchmen. The gates, shut just in time, had left part of the latter outside, and it was they who had turned with fury against their assailants, while the cannon thundered and the rifles cracked from the summit of the ramparts.

"Ah!" cried Eugene, waving his rifle, joyously, "I knew a battle would be a fine sight!"

Just as he said this a ball passed between Charles and himself, cutting off one of his curls and making a hole in his hat; then it stretched in death a patriot who had stood just behind them. The wind of its passage blew upon the face of each.

"Oh! I know who it was. I saw him! I saw him!" cried Charles.

"Who, who?" asked Eugene.

"There, that one there, the one who is tearing his cartridge in order to reload his gun."

"Wait! wait! Are you perfectly sure?"

"I should think so!"

"Well, then, look!"

The youth fired. The dragoon's horse leaped forward; he had no doubt involuntarily put spurs to it.

"Hit! hit!" cried Eugene.

And, indeed, the dragoon tried to sling his musket into place, but in vain; the weapon soon slipped from his grasp. He put one hand to his side, and trying to guide his horse with the other endeavored to escape from the combat; but after a few steps he swayed backward and forward and then fell headlong to the ground. One of his feet caught in the stirrup, and the frightened horse set off at a gallop, dragging him along. The two boys followed him with their eyes for a moment, but both horse and rider soon disappeared in the smoke.

Just then the gates opened and the garrison marched forth with drums beating and bayonets levelled. It was the final effort of the patriots and the enemy had not expected it. The trumpets sounded the retreat, and the cavalry, scattered over the plain, formed together at the road, and galloped off toward Kilstett and Gambelheim. The cannon were fired awhile longer at the fugitives, but the rapidity of their retreat soon put them out of range.

The two boys returned to the city exultant, Charles at having seen a battle, Eugene at having taken part in one. Charles made Eugene promise that he would teach him to use the rifle which he handled so skilfully. And then, for the first time, did they learn the cause of this alarm.

General Eisemberg, an old German campaigner of the school of Luckner, who had waged a war of partisans with a certain success, had been charged by Pichegru with the defence of the advance-post of Bischwiller. Either through carelessness, or a desire to oppose Saint-Just, instead of taking the precautions directed by the representatives of the people, he had allowed his troops and himself to be surprised, and he and his staff had barely saved themselves by flight. At the foot of the walls, finding himself supported, he had turned, but too late; the alarm had been given in the city, and every one knew that the unfortunate officer might just as well die or let himself be taken prisoner, as to seek safety in a city where Saint-Just commanded. And in fact he had scarcely entered the gates before he, and all his staff, were arrested by order of the Representative of the People.

When they returned to the Hôtel de la Lanterne, the two young friends found poor Madame Teutch in a state of the

greatest anxiety. Eugene was beginning to be known in the town where he had spent a month, and some one had told her that the young fellow had been seen near the Haguenau gate with a rifle in his hand. At first she had not believed it, but when she saw him return with the rifle, she was seized with a retrospective terror that doubled the interest of Charles' story. The boy was as enthusiastic as a conscript who has just seen his first battle.

But all this enthusiasm did not make Charles forget that he was to dine with citizen Euloge Schneider at two o'clock. At five minutes of two, having ascended the steps more slowly than he had descended them in the morning, he knocked at the little door to which they led.



CHAPTER V

MADemoiselle DE BRUMPT

At the first sound of the cannon the Society of the Propaganda had assembled and declared its session to be permanent as long as Strasbourg was in danger.

Although Euloge Schneider was a fanatical Jacobin, being in relation to Marat what Marat was to Robespierre, he was excelled in patriotism by the Society of the Propaganda. As a result the public prosecutor, powerful as he was, had to reckon with two powers, between which he was obliged to steer his course. That is to say, with Saint-Just, who, strange as it must seem to our readers of the present day, represented the moderate Republican party, and with the Propagande, which represented the ultra-Jacobins. Saint-Just held the material power, but citizen Tétrell possessed the moral power.

Euloge Schneider therefore did not dare to absent himself from the assemblage of the Propagande, which met to discuss the best means of saving the country; while Saint-Just and Lebas, the first to gallop out of Strasbourg into the midst of the firing—where they were easily recognized as the people's representatives by their uniforms and their tri-color plumes—had ordered the gates to be shut behind them, and had taken their places in the first ranks of the Republicans.

When the enemy had been routed, they had immediately returned to Strasbourg and gone to their hotel, while the Propagande continued their debate, although the peril had ceased. This was the reason why Euloge Schneider, who was so particular to admonish others to punctuality, was half an hour late himself.

Charles had profited by this delay to become acquainted with the other three guests who were to be at table with him. They, on their side, having been notified by Schneider, welcomed kindly the boy who had been sent to him to be made into a scholar, and to whom they had each resolved to give an education according to their individual knowledge and principles.

These men were three in number, as we have said; their names were Edelmann, Young, and Monnet.

Edelmann was a remarkable musician, the equal of Gossec in church music. He had also set the poem of "Ariadne in the Isle of Naxos" to music for the stage, and the piece was played in France, in 1818 or 1820. He was small, with a melancholy countenance. He always wore spectacles, which seemed to have grown to his nose; he dressed in a brown coat, which was always buttoned from top to bottom with copper buttons. He had cast in his lot with the Revolutionary party with the violence and fanaticism of an imaginative man. When his friend Diedrich, mayor of Strasbourg, was accused of moderation by Schneider and succumbed in the struggle, he bore witness against him, saying: "I shall mourn for you because you are my friend, but you are a traitor, therefore you must die."

As for the second of the trio, Young, he was a poor shoemaker, within whose coarse exterior Nature, as sometimes happens by caprice, had concealed the soul of a poet. He knew Latin and Greek, but composed his odes and satires only in German. His well-known Republicanism had made his poetry popular, and the common people would often stop him on the street, crying, "Verses! Verses!" Then he would stop, and mounting upon some stone, or the edge of a well, or some adjacent balcony, would fling his odes and satires to the skies like burning, flaming rockets. He was one of those rarely honest men, one of those revolutionists who acted in all good faith, and who, blindly devoted to the majesty of the popular principle, thought of the Revolution only as the means of emancipation for all the human race, and who died like the ancient martyrs, without complaint, and without regret, convinced of the future triumph of their religion.

Monnet, the third, was not a stranger to Charles, and the boy welcomed him with a cry of joy. He had been a soldier, a grenadier, in his youth, and when he left the service had become a priest and prefect of the college in Besançon, where Charles had known him. When he was twenty-eight years of age, and had begun to regret the vows he had taken, the Revolution came to break them. He was tall and stooped a little, was full of kindness and courtesy, and possessed a melancholy grace which attracted strangers to him at first sight. His smile was sad and sometimes bitter; one would have thought that he concealed in the depths of his heart some mournful mystery, and that he besought of men, or rather of humanity, a shelter from his own innocence—the greatest of all dangers at such a time. He had been thrown, or rather had fallen, into the extreme party of which Schneider was a member; and now, trembling because of his share in the popular fury, and because he had been an accomplice in crime, he drifted, with his eyes shut, he knew not whither.

These three men were Schneider's inseparable friends. They had begun to feel alarmed by his prolonged absence, for each of them realized that Schneider was his pillar of strength. If Schneider toppled, they fell; if Schneider fell, they were dead men.

Monnet, the most nervous and consequently the most impatient of them all, had already risen to go for news, when they suddenly heard the grating of a key in the lock and the door was pushed violently open. At the same moment Schneider entered.

The session must have been a stormy one, for upon the ashy pallor of his forehead, blotches of purple blood stood out prominently. Although December was half gone, his face was covered with perspiration, and his loosened cravat showed the angry swelling of his bull-like neck. As he entered he threw his hat, which he had held in his hand, to the other end of the room.

When they saw him, the three men rose as if moved by a common spring, and hastened toward him. Charles on the contrary had drawn behind his chair as if for protection.

"Citizens," cried Schneider, gritting his teeth, "citizens, I have to announce to you the good news that I am to be married in eight days."

"You?" exclaimed the three men with one accord.

"Yes! What an astounding bit of news for Strasbourg when it gets about. 'Haven't you heard?—No.—The Monk of Cologne is to be married.—Yes?—Yes, that is a fact!' Young, you shall write the epithalamium; Edelmänn shall set it to music, and Monnet, who is as cheerful as the grave, shall sing it. You must send the news to your father, Charles, by the next courier."

"And who are you going to marry?"

"I don't know anything about that as yet; and I don't care. I have almost a mind to marry my old cook. It would serve as a good example of the fusion of the classes."

"But what has happened? Tell us."

"Nothing much, but I have been interrogated, attacked, accused—yes, accused."

"Where?"

"At the Propagande."

"Oh!" cried Monnet, "a society that you created."

"Have you never heard of children who kill their own fathers?"

"But who attacked you?"

"Tétrell. You know he is the democrat who invented the luxurious party of sans-culottism; who has pistols from Versailles, pistols with fleur-de-lis on them, and horses fit for a prince to ride, and who is, I don't know why, the idol of the people of Strasbourg. Perhaps because he is gilded like a drum-major—he is tall enough for one! It seems to me that I have given enough pledges of good faith. But, no; the coat of a reporting commissioner cannot cover the frock of the Capuchin, or the cassock of the canon. He taunted me with this infamous stain of priesthood, which he says makes me constantly suspected by the true friends of liberty. Who has immolated more victims than I to the sainted cause of liberty? Haven't I cut off twenty-six heads in one month? Isn't that enough? How many do they want?"

"Calm yourself, Schneider, calm yourself!"

"It is enough to drive one crazy," continued Schneider, growing more and more excited, "between the Propagande, which is always saying, 'Not enough!' and Saint-Just, who says, 'Too much!' Yesterday I arrested six of these aristocrat dogs and four to-day. My Hussars of Death are constantly seen in the streets of Strasbourg and its environs; this very night I shall arrest an emigré, who has had the audacity to cross the Rhine in a contraband boat, and come to Plobsheim with his family, to conspire. That is at least a sure case. Ah! I understand one thing now!" he cried, lifting his arm threateningly; "and that is, that events are stronger than wills, and that although there are men who, like the war-chariots of Holy Writ, crush multitudes as they pass, they themselves are pushed forward by the same irresistible power that tears volcanoes and hurls cataracts."

Then, after this flow of words, which did not lack a certain eloquence, he burst into a harsh laugh.

"Bah!" said he, "there is nothing before life, and nothing after life. It is a waking nightmare, that is all. Is it worth while worrying over it while it lasts, or regretting when it is lost? Faith, no; let us dine. *Valeat res ludicra*, isn't that so, Charles?"

And preceding his friends, he led the way into the dining-room, where a sumptuous repast awaited them.

"But," said Young, seating himself with the others at the table, "what is there in all that to make you get married within the week?"

"Ah! true, I forgot the best part of the story. When they called me the Monk of Cologne—where I never was a monk—and the canon of Augsburg—where I never was a canon—they reproached me for my orgies and debaucheries! My orgies! Let me tell you what they were; for thirty-four years I drank nothing but water and ate nothing but carrots; it is no more than fair that I should eat white bread and meat now. My debaucheries! If they think I threw my frock to the devil to live like Saint Anthony, they are mistaken. Well, there is one way to end all that, and that is to marry. I shall be as faithful a husband and as good a father of a family as another, if citizen Saint-Just will give me time."

"Have you at least selected the fortunate lady who is to have the honor of sharing your couch?" asked Edelmann.

"Oh!" said Schneider, "so long as there is a woman, the devil himself can look out for her."

"To the health of Schneider's future wife!" cried Young; "and since he has left the devil to provide her, may he at least send one who is young, beautiful, and rich."

"Hurrah for Schneider's wife!" said Monnet sadly.

Just then the door of the dining-room opened, and the old cook appeared on the threshold.

"There is a citizeness here," she said, "who wishes to speak to Euloge Schneider on urgent business."

"Well," said Schneider, "I know nothing more urgent than my dinner. Tell her to return to-morrow."

The old woman disappeared, but returned almost immediately. "She says that to-morrow will be too late."

"Then why didn't she come sooner?"

"Because that was impossible," said a soft supplicating voice in the ante-chamber. "Let me see you, I beg, I implore you!"

Euloge, with a gesture of impatience, bade the old cook pull the door to and come close to him. But then, remembering the freshness and youthfulness of the voice, he said with the smile of a satyr: "Is she young?"

"Maybe eighteen," replied the old woman.

"Pretty?"

"With the devil's own beauty."

The three men began to laugh.

"You hear, Schneider, the devil's own beauty."

"Now," said Young, "we need only find out if she is rich, and there is your wife ready to hand. Open the door, old woman, and don't keep her waiting. You ought to know the pretty child if she comes from the devil."

"Why not from God?" asked Charles, in such a sweet voice that the three men started at it.

"Because our friend Schneider has quarrelled with God, and he stands very high with the devil. I don't know any other reason."

"And because," said Young, "it is only the devil who gives such prompt answers to prayers."

"Well," said Schneider, "let her come in."

The old woman opened the door at once, and on its threshold there appeared the elegant figure of a young girl dressed in a travelling costume, and wrapped in a black satin mantle lined with rose-colored taffeta. She took one step into the room, then stopped at sight of the candles and the four guests, who were gazing at her with an admiration to which they gave expression in a low murmur, and said: "Citizens, which one of you is the citizen Commissioner of the Republic?"

"I am, citizeness," replied Schneider, without rising.

"Citizen," she said, "I have a favor to ask of you on which my life depends." And her glance travelled anxiously from one guest to another.

"You need not be alarmed by the presence of my friends," said Schneider; "they are true friends, and lovers of beauty. This is my friend Edelmänn, who is a musician."

The young girl moved her head slightly as if to say, "I know his music."

"This is my friend Young, who is a poet," continued Schneider.

The same movement of the head again meaning, "I know his verses."

"And, lastly, here is my friend Monnet, who is neither a musician nor a poet, but who has eyes and a heart, and who is disposed, as I can see at a glance, to plead your cause for you. As for this young friend, as you see, he is only a student; but he knows enough to conjugate the verb, to love, in three languages. You may therefore explain yourself before them, unless what you have to say is sufficiently confidential to require a private interview."

And he rose as he spoke, pointing to a half open door, leading into an empty salon. But the young girl replied, quickly: "No, no, monsieur—"

Schneider frowned.

"Your pardon, citizen. No, citizen, what I have to say fears neither light nor publicity."

Schneider sat down, motioning to the young girl to take a chair. But she shook her head.

"It is more fitting that suppliants should stand," she said.

"Then," said Schneider, "let us proceed regularly. I have told you who we are; will you tell us who you are?"

"My name is Clotilde Brumpt."

"*De* Brumpt, you mean."

"It would be unjust to reproach me with a crime that antedated my birth by some three or four hundred years, and with which I had nothing to do."

"You need tell me nothing more; I know your story, and I also know what you have come for."

The young girl sank upon her knees, and, as she lifted her head and clasped hands, the hood of her mantle fell upon her shoulders and fully disclosed a face of surpassing loveliness. Her beautiful blond hair was parted in the middle of her head, and fell in long curls on either side, framing a face of perfect oval. Her forehead, of a clear white, was made still more dazzling by eyes, eyebrows and lashes of black; the nose was straight but sensitive, moving with the slight trembling of her cheeks, which showed traces of the many tears she had shed; her lips, half parted, seemed sculptured from rose coral, and behind them her teeth gleamed faintly like pearls. Her neck, as white as snow and as smooth as satin, was lost in the folds of a black dress that came close up to the throat, but whose folds revealed the graceful outlines of her body. She was magnificent.

"Yes, yes," said Schneider, "you are beautiful, and you have the beauty, the grace, and the seduction of the accursed races. But we are not Asiatics, to be seduced by the beauty of a Helen or a Roxelane. Your father conspires, your father is guilty, your father must die."

The young girl uttered a cry as though the words had been a dagger that had pierced her heart.

"Oh! no! my father is not a conspirator," she cried.

"If he is not a conspirator, why did he emigrate?"

"He emigrated because, belonging to the Prince de Condé, he thought he ought to follow him into exile; but, faithful to his country as he was to his prince, he would not fight against France, and during his two years of exile his sword has hung idle in its scabbard."

"What was he doing in France, and why did he cross the Rhine?"

"Alas! my mourning will answer you, citizen Commissioner. My mother was dying on this side of the river, scarcely twelve miles away; the man in whose arms she had passed twenty happy years was anxiously awaiting a word that might bid him hope again. Each message said: 'Worse! worse! Still worse!' Day before yesterday he could bear it no longer, and, disguised as a peasant, he crossed the river with the boatman. Doubtless the reward tempted him, and he, God forgive him! denounced my father, who was arrested only this evening. Ask your agents when—just as my mother died. Ask them what he was doing—he was weeping as he closed her eyes. Ah! if ever it were pardonable to return from

exile, it is when a man does so to bid a last adieu to the mother of his children. You will tell me that the law is inexorable, and that every emigrant who returns to France deserves death. Yes, if he enters with the intention of conspiring; but not when he returns with clasped hands to kneel beside a deathbed."

"Citizeness Brumpt," said Schneider, "the law does not indulge in such subtle sentimentalities. It says, 'In such a case, under such circumstances, the penalty is death.' The man who puts himself in such a situation, knowing the law, is guilty. Now, if he is guilty, he must die."

"No, no, not if he is judged by men, and those men have a heart."

"A heart!" cried Schneider. "Do you think man is always his own master, and permitted to have a heart at will? It is plain that you do not know of what the Propagande accused me to-day. They said that my heart was too accessible to human supplications. Do you not think that it would be easier and more agreeable, too, for me, when I see a beautiful young creature like you at my feet, to lift her up and dry her tears, than to say, 'It is useless; you are only losing your time.' No, unfortunately the law is there, and its organs must be equally inflexible. The law is not a woman; it is a brazen statue, holding a sword in one hand and a pair of scales in the other; nothing can be weighed in these balances save the accusation on the one side, and the truth on the other. Nothing can turn the blade of that terrible sword from the path that is traced for it. Along this path it has met the heads of a king, a queen, and a prince, and those three heads have fallen as would that of any beggar caught in an act of murder or incendiarism. To-morrow I shall go to Plobsheim; the guillotine and the executioner will follow me. If your father is not an emigrant, if he did not secretly cross the Rhine, if, in short, the accusation is unjust, he will be set at liberty; but if the accusation, which your lips have confirmed, is, on the contrary, a true one, then his head will fall in the public square of Plobsheim the day after to-morrow."

The young girl raised her head, and, controlling herself with difficulty, said: "Then you will give me no hope?"

"None."

"Then a last word," said she, rising suddenly.

"What is it?"

"I will tell it to you alone."

"Then come with me."

The young girl went first, walking, with a firm step, to the salon, which she entered unhesitatingly.

Schneider closed the door after them. Scarcely were they alone than he attempted to put his arm around her; but, simply and with dignity, she repulsed him.

"In order that you may pardon the last attempt that I shall make to influence you, citizen Schneider," she said, "you must remember that I have tried all honorable means and been repulsed. You must remember that I am in despair, and that, wishing to save my father's life, and having been unable to move you, it is my duty to say to you, 'Tears and prayers have been unavailing; money—'"

Schneider shrugged his shoulders and pursed his lips disdainfully, but the young girl would not be interrupted.

"I am rich," she continued; "my mother is dead; I have inherited an immense fortune which belongs to me, and to me alone. I can dispose of two millions. If I had four I would offer them to you, but I have only two—will you have them? Take them and spare my father."

Schneider laid his hand on her shoulder. He was lost in thought and his tufted eyebrows almost concealed his eyes from the young girl's eager gaze.

"To-morrow," said he, "I shall go to Plobsheim as I told you. You have just made me a proposition; I will make you another when I arrive."

"What do you mean?" cried the young girl.

"I mean that, if you are willing, we can arrange the matter."

"If this proposition affects my honor, it is useless to make it."

"It does not."

"Then you will be welcome at Plobsheim."

And, bowing without hope but also without tears, she opened the door, crossed the dining-room, and passed out with a slight inclination of the head to the other guests. Neither the three men nor the boy could see her face, which was completely concealed in her hood.

The commissioner of the Republic followed her; he watched the dining-room door until she had closed it, and then listened until he heard the wheels of her carriage roll away. Then, approaching the table, he filled his own glass and those of his friends with the entire contents of a bottle of *Liebfraumilch*, and said: "With this generous wine let us drink to the health of citizeness Clotilde Brumpt, the betrothed of Jean-Georges-Euloge Schneider."

He raised his glass, and, deeming it useless to ask for an explanation which he probably would not give, his four friends followed his example.

CHAPTER VI

MASTER NICHOLAS

This scene made a deep impression upon all present, varying according to their different personalities, but no one was more intensely moved than our young scholar. He had of course seen women before, but this was the first time that a woman had been revealed to him. Mademoiselle de Brumpt, as we have said, was marvellously beautiful, and this beauty had appeared to the boy under the most favorable circumstances. He experienced a strange emotion, a painful constriction of the heart, when, after the young girl's departure, Schneider, raising his glass, had announced that Mademoiselle de Brumpt was his betrothed and would soon be his wife.

What had passed in the salon? By what persuasive words had Schneider induced her to give such sudden consent? For the boy did not doubt from his host's tone of assurance that the girl had consented. Had she asked the private interview for the purpose of offering herself to him? In that case filial love must have been supreme to have induced the pure lily, the perfumed rose, to unite herself with this prickly holly, this coarse thistle; and it seemed to Charles that, were he her father, he would rather die a hundred deaths than buy back his life at the price of his daughter's happiness.

Even as this was the first time that he had realized a woman's beauty, so it was the first time that he appreciated the abyss which ugliness can create between two people of opposite sexes. And just how ugly Euloge was, Charles now perceived for the first time. It was, moreover, an ugliness which nothing could efface! an ugliness in which was blended with the moral the fetid hideousness of one of those faces which, while still young, have been sealed with the seal of hypocrisy.

Charles, absorbed in his own reflections, had turned toward the door through which the young girl had disappeared, like a heliotrope toward the setting sun. He seemed, with open mouth and nostrils dilated, to be absorbing the perfumed atoms which had floated round her as she passed. The nervous sensations of youth had been awakened in him, and as, in April, the chest expands to inhale the first breeze of spring, so his heart dilated with the first breath of love. It was not yet day, only the dawn; it was not yet love, but the herald which announced it.

He was about to rise and follow the magnetic current he knew not whither, as young and agitated hearts are wont to do, when Schneider rang. The sound made him start and fall from the heights to which he was ascending.

The old woman appeared.

"Are there any of my hussars at hand?" asked Schneider.

"Two," replied the woman.

"Let one of them go on horseback, and fetch Master Nicholas at once," said he.

The old woman closed the door without a question, which showed that she knew who was meant.

Charles did not understand it; but it was evident that, like the toast following Mademoiselle de Brumpt's departure, this order was connected with the same event. It was also evident that the three other guests knew who Master Nicholas was, since they, who were so free to talk with Schneider, asked no questions. Charles would have asked his neighbor Monnet, but he dared not, for fear that Schneider would overhear the question and answer himself.

There was a short silence, during which a certain restraint seemed to have fallen upon the party; the expectation of coffee—that pleasant beverage of dessert—and even its arrival, had not the power to draw aside so much as a corner of the sombre veil in which this order of Schneider's seemed to have enveloped them.

Ten minutes passed thus. At the end of that time they heard three blows struck in a peculiar fashion.

The guests started; Edelmänn buttoned up his coat, which had been for a minute half open; Young coughed, and Monnet turned as pale as his own shirt.

"It is he," said Euloge, frowning, and speaking in a preoccupied voice that to Charles seemed strangely altered.

The door opened, and the old woman announced: "The citizen Nicholas!"

Then she stood aside to allow the new-comer to pass, taking care as she did so that he should not touch her.

A small man, thin, pale, and grave, entered. He was dressed like any one else, and yet, without apparent reason for it,

there was something in his appearance, his figure, and his whole air that impressed the beholder as strange and weird.

Edelmann, Young and Monnet drew back their chairs. Euloge alone moved his forward.

The little man took two steps into the room, bowed to Euloge without paying any attention to the others, and then remained standing, with his eyes fixed on the chief.

"We start to-morrow at nine o'clock," said Euloge.

"For what place?"

"Plobsheim."

"Do we stop there?"

"For two days."

"How many assistants?"

"Two. Is your machine in order?"

The little man smiled, and shrugged his shoulders, as if to say: "What a question!" Then he asked aloud: "Shall I meet you at the Kehl gate, or shall I come for you?"

"Come for me."

"I shall be here at nine o'clock precisely."

The little man turned as if to go out.

"Wait," said Schneider; "you are not going away without drinking to the health of the Republic?"

The little man accepted with a bow. Schneider rang, and the old woman came in.

"A glass for citizen Nicholas," he said.

Schneider took the first bottle that came to hand, and inclined it gently over the glass in order not to disturb the wine; a few red drops fell into the glass.

"I don't drink red wine," said the little man.

"True," answered Schneider; then he added, with a laugh, "Are you still nervous, citizen Nicholas?"

"Yes."

Schneider selected a second bottle of wine, champagne this time.

"Here," said he, holding it out, "guillotine me that, citizen!" And he began to laugh; Edelmann, Young, and Monnet endeavored to follow his example, but in vain.

The little man preserved his gravity. He took the bottle, drew a straight, long pointed knife from his belt, and ran it around the neck of the bottle several times; then he struck it a sharp blow just below the opening. The froth leaped out as blood leaps from a severed head, but Schneider was ready and caught the wine in his glass.

The little man poured for every one; but there was only enough for five glasses instead of six. Charles' glass remained empty, and Charles took good care not to call attention to the fact.

Edelmann, Young, Monnet and Schneider clinked glasses with the little man. Whether by accident or intention, Schneider's glass was broken by the shock.

All five exclaimed: "Long live the Republic!"

But only four drank the health; Schneider's glass was empty. A few drops of wine remained in the bottle. He seized it feverishly, and carried it quickly to his mouth. But he put it down even more quickly. The sharp edges of the broken glass had cut his lips through to the teeth. An oath fell from his bleeding lips, and he crushed the bottle with his foot.

"Shall I still come to-morrow at the same hour?" asked Master Nicholas, quietly.

"Yes, and go to the devil!" said Schneider, pressing his handkerchief to his mouth.

Master Nicholas bowed and withdrew.

Schneider, very pale and almost fainting at sight of his own blood, which flowed profusely, had fallen back in his chair. Edelmann and Young went to his assistance. Charles held Monnet back by his coat-tail.

"Who is Master Nicholas?" he asked, shivering with emotion at the strange scene which had just taken place.

"Don't you know him?" asked Monnet.

"How should I know him? I have only been in Strasbourg since yesterday."

Monnet did not reply, but put his hand to his neck.

"I don't understand," said Charles.

"Don't you know that he is the executioner?" asked Monnet, lowering his voice.

Charles started. "But the machinery—that is—"

"Exactly."

"And what is he going to do with the guillotine at Plobsheim?"

"He told you; he is going to be married!"

Charles pressed Monnet's cold, damp hand and darted out of the room. As though through a blood-red fog he had caught a glimpse of the truth.



CHAPTER VII

FILIAL LOVE, OR THE WOODEN LEG

Charles returned to Madame Teutch's house on a run, like the hare to his form, or the fox to his hole. It was his refuge; once there he thought himself safe; once upon the threshold of the Hôtel de la Lanterne he thought he had nothing more to fear.

He asked after his young friend, and learned that he was in his room, where he was taking a fencing-lesson of the sergeant-major of a Strasbourg regiment.

This sergeant-major had served under his father, the Marquis de Beauharnais, who had occasion to notice him three or four times for his extreme bravery.

As soon as he learned that his son was to go to Strasbourg to seek for papers which might be useful to him, the marquis advised him not to discontinue the exercises which were a part of the education of a young man of good family. He bade him ascertain whether Sergeant Pierre Augereau were still at Strasbourg, and if so, to ask him to practice fencing with him from time to time.

Eugene had found Pierre Augereau, but he had become a sergeant-major, and no longer practiced fencing except for his own amusement. As soon, however, as he learned that the young man who wished to take fencing lessons from him was the son of his old general, he insisted upon going to him at the Hôtel de la Lanterne. But what made the sergeant-major especially interested was the fact that in the young man he found, not a pupil, but a master who defended himself wonderfully well against the rough, incoherent play of the old tactician; and, furthermore—a thing which was by no means to be despised—every time he had a fencing-bout with his young pupil, the latter invited him to dinner; and a dinner at the Lanterne was far better than one at the barracks.

Pierre Augereau belonged to the regiment which had left the city that morning to give chase to the Austrians, and he had seen his pupil on the rampart, gun in hand. He had saluted him repeatedly with his sabre, but the lad had been too engrossed in sending balls after the Austrians to heed the telegraphic signals of the sergeant-major. From the citizeness Teutch, Augereau had learned how nearly Eugene had escaped being killed; she had shown him the bullet hole, and had told him how the boy had returned shot for shot—a return that had proved fatal to the Austrian. Therefore, Augereau had greatly complimented his pupil, and had been invited to the meal, which, coming between the great noon breakfast and the supper, which is generally eaten at ten in the evening, constitutes the dinner of Germany.

When Charles arrived the master and the pupil were in the act of saluting each other; the lesson was over, Eugene had been unusually full of vigor, strength and agility, and Augereau was therefore doubly proud of him. The table was laid in the little room where the two boys had breakfasted in the morning.

Eugene presented his new friend to the sergeant-major, who, seeing him so pale and thin, did not conceive a very exalted opinion of him. Eugene asked Madame Teutch to lay another cover; but Charles was not hungry, having just risen from table; he declared therefore that he would content himself with drinking to the sergeant-major's advancement, but that he did not care to eat. And to explain his preoccupation he related the scene which he had just witnessed.

Pierre Augereau in his turn related the story of his life: how he was born in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, the son of a journeyman mason and a fruit-seller. From his infancy he had a decided talent for fencing, which he learned as the gamin of Paris learns everything. His adventurous life had led him to Naples, where he had taken service in the carabineers of King Ferdinand; then he had turned fencing-master, having combined the French and Neapolitan methods, which made his fencing extremely dangerous. In 1792, when the order was given for all Frenchmen to leave the city, he returned to France, where he arrived a few days after the 2d of September, in time to join the volunteers whom Danton was despatching to the armies from the Champ de Mars, and who played such a brilliant part in the victory of Jemmapes. Augereau had received his first promotion there; then he had passed to the Army of the Rhine, where the Marquis de Beauharnais raised him to sergeant, and in which he had just become a sergeant-major. He was thirty-six years old, and his great ambition was to reach the rank of captain.

Eugene had no tale to tell, but he had a proposition to make, which was received with enthusiasm; it was to go to the play in order to divert Charles from his melancholy.

Citizen Bergere's troupe was at that time playing, at the hall of Breuil, "Brutus," one of Voltaire's plays, and "Filial

Love, or the Wooden Leg," by Demoustiers.

They hastened their dinner, and at six o'clock, protected by the sergeant, who was a head taller than they, and who possessed two strong fists, not only for his own service but also for his friends, the three entered the body of the theatre, and found with difficulty three places in the seventh or eighth row of the orchestra. At that period arm-chairs were unknown in the theatres.

The fortunate termination of the battle of the morning had made a sort of festival of the day, and the tragedy of "Brutus," which they were playing, seemed in the nature of a tribute to the courage of the populace. Several heroes of the day were pointed out among the audience, and it was universally known that the young actor who played the part of Titus had fought in the first ranks and been wounded.

In the midst of the confusion of sounds which always precedes a performance when the spectators are more numerous than the seats which the theatre contains, the manager struck his three raps, and instantly, as if by magic, everything was quiet. Following the three raps of the manager, Tétrell, in a voice of thunder, commanded silence. The latter was extremely proud of the victory he had gained over Schneider at the Propagande.

Charles recognized his protector of the previous night, and pointed him out to Eugene, but without speaking of his meeting with him, and the advice which he had given him.

Eugene knew Tétrell through having seen him in the streets of Strasbourg; he had heard that he was one of his father's denounciators, and he naturally regarded him with aversion.

As for Augereau, he saw him for the first time, and, caricaturist that he was, like all the children of the faubourgs, he immediately noticed the man's enormous nostrils, which seemed to extend over his cheeks in an exaggerated fashion, and which resembled those extinguishers on the end of poles which sacristans carry to put out the flame of the tall candles which they cannot reach with their breath.

Little Charles was seated just below Tétrell; Augereau, who sat on the other side of Eugene, proposed that he change places with Charles.

"Why?" asked Charles.

"Because you are just within range of citizen Tétrell's breath," replied Augereau. "And I am afraid that when he draws it in he will draw you in with it."

Tétrell was more feared than loved, and the remark, despite its poor taste, caused a laugh.

"Silence!" roared Tétrell.

"What did you say?" asked Augereau, in the mocking tone peculiar to Parisians. And as he stood up to look in his interlocutor's face, the audience recognized the uniform of the regiment that had made the sortie in the morning. They burst into applause, mingled with shouts of "Bravo, sergeant-major! Long live the sergeant-major!"

Augereau gave the military salute and sat down; and as the curtain rose just then, attracting the attention of the audience, nothing more was thought of Tétrell's nose, nor of the sergeant-major's interruption.

The curtain rises, it will be remembered, upon a session of the Roman senate, in which Junius Brutus, first consul of Borne with Publicola, announces that Tarquin, who is besieging Rome, has sent an ambassador.

From the beginning it was easy to see the spirit which animated the spectators. After the first few lines, Brutus pronounces these:

Rome knows I prize her liberty beyond!
All that is dear. Yet though my bosom glows
With the same ardor, my opinion differs.
I cannot but behold this embassy
As the first homage paid by sovereign power
To Rome's free sons; we should accustom thus
The towering and despotic power of kings
To treat on even terms with our republic;
Till, Heaven accomplishing its just decrees,
The time shall come to treat with them as subjects.

A thunder of applause burst forth; it seemed as if France, like Rome, could foresee her lofty destiny. Brutus, interrupted in his speech, had to wait nearly ten minutes before he could continue. He was interrupted a second time, and with still more enthusiasm, when he came to these lines:

The realm, long crushed beneath his iron rod,
Through dint of suffering hath regained its virtue.
Tarquin hath fixed again our native rights;
And from the uncommon rankness of his crimes
Each public blessing sprang. Yon Tuscans now
May follow, if they dare, the bright example,
And shake off tyrants.

Here the consuls returned to the altar with the senate, and their march was accompanied with cries and applause; then there was silence, in expectation of the invocation.

The actor who played the part of Brutus pronounced the words in a loud voice:

O immortal power,
God of heroic chiefs, of warring hosts,
And of illustrious Rome! O Mars! receive
The vows we pour forth on thy sacred altar,
In the consenting senate's mingled name,
In mine and that of all thy genuine sons,
Who do not disgrace their fire! If hid within
Rome's secret bosom there exists a traitor
Who with base mind regrets the loss of kings,
And would behold again a tyrant lord—
May the wretch expire beneath a thousand tortures!
His guilty ashes scattered through the air,
The sport of winds, while naught remains behind
But his vile name, more loathsome to the tongue
Of latest times than that which Rome condemns
To utmost infamy, detested Tarquin's.

In times of political excitement it is not the value of the lines which is applauded, but simply their accordance with the sentiments of the audience. Rarely have more common-place tirades proceeded from the human mouth, yet never were the splendid verses of Corneille and Racine welcomed with such enthusiasm. But this enthusiasm, which seemed as if it could not increase, knew no bounds when, the curtain rising on the second act, the audience saw the young actor who played the part of Titus enter with his arm in a sling. An Austrian ball had broken it. It seemed as if the play could never proceed, so incessant was the applause.

The few lines referring to Titus and his patriotism were encored, and then, repulsing the offers of Porsenna, Titus says:

Yet, born a Roman, I will die for Rome!
This vigorous senate, though to me unjust,
Pull of suspicious jealousy, and fear,
I love beyond the splendor of a court
And the proud sceptre of a single lord.
I am the son of Brutus, and my heart
Deep-graven bears the love of liberty,
And hate of kings.

Finally when, in the following scene, he exclaims, renouncing his love:

Banish far
The vain delusion! Rome with loud acclaim

Invites me to the Capitol; the people
Seek the triumphal arches raised on high,
Thick with my glory crowned, and full adorned
With all my labors; underneath their shade
Convened, they wait my presence to begin
The sacred rites, the strict coercive oath,
Inviolable surety of our freedom—

the most enthusiastic of the people darted upon the stage, in order to embrace the player and press his hand, while the ladies waved their handkerchiefs and threw bouquets. Nothing was lacking to the triumph of Voltaire and Brutus, and above all Fleury, the young actor, for he carried off the honors of the evening.

As has been said, the second piece was by the Frenchman Demoustier, and was called "Filial Love, or the Wooden Leg." It was one of those idyls prompted by the Republic's muse; for it is a remarkable fact that never was dramatic literature more roseate than during the years '92, '93 and '94—that is the time that produced "The Death of Abel," "The Peacemaker," and "The Farmer's Beautiful Wife." It seemed as if, after the blood-stained iniquities of the street, the people had need of these insipidities to restore their equilibrium. Nero crowned himself with flowers after the burning of Rome.

But an incident occurred which, though it had to do with the morning's battle, threatened to put an end to the performance. Madame Fromont, who played the part of Louise, the only woman in the piece, had lost both her father and her husband in the morning's skirmish. It was therefore almost impossible for her, under the circumstances, to play the part of a lover, or, in fact, any part at all.

The curtain rose between the two plays and Titus-Fleury reappeared. At first the audience applauded, then, seeing that he had something to say, they were silent. In fact he had come with tears in his eyes to say, in the name of Madame Fromont, that the management be allowed to replace "Filial Love" with "Rose and Colas," since Madame Fromont mourned her father and husband, who had been killed for the Republic. Cries of "Yes, yes!" mingled with cheers, were heard all over the house, and Fleury had already bowed to depart, when Tétrell, rising, made a sign that he wished to speak. At once several voices cried: "It is Tétrell, the friend of the people! Tétrell, the terror of the aristocrats! Let him speak! Long live Tétrell!"



CHAPTER VIII

THE PROVOCATION

Tétrell was more elegant than ever on this evening; he wore a blue coat with large lapels and gold buttons, and a white piqué vest, which turned back until it covered almost the whole front of his coat. A tri-color belt, with gold fringe, encircled his waist, and in it he had stuck pistols with ivory-chased butts and barrels inlaid with gold. His sabre with its scabbard of red morocco, insolently thrown over the balcony, hung over the parterre like another sword of Damocles.

Tétrell began by striking the railing of the balcony until the dust flew from the velvet. Then he cried angrily:

"Citizens, what does all this mean? I thought I was at Lacedæmona, but it seems that I am mistaken, and that this is Corinth or Sybaris. Does a republican woman dare shelter herself behind such excuses in the presence of Republicans? We mistake ourselves for those miserable slaves on the other bank of the Rhine, these dogs of aristocrats, who, when we have whipped them, tire their lungs out, crying "Libra!" Two men have died for their country, leaving a memory of immortal glory. The women of Sparta when they presented their shields to their sons and husbands, did so with these words: 'With them, or upon them!' And when they returned upon them, that is to say dead, they attired themselves in their most gorgeous raiment. Citizeness Fromont is pretty; she will not long want for lovers! All the handsome fellows have not been killed at the Haguenau gate; as for her father, there is not an old patriot but envies him the honor of his death. Therefore, citizen Fleury, do not hope to move us with the pretended grief of a citizeness favored by the destiny of war, who, by a single cannon-shot, has acquired a crown for her dowry and a great people for her family. Go tell her to appear; go tell her to sing; and, above all, bid her spare us her tears; to-day is the people's feast-day, and tears are aristocratic!"

Every one was silent. Tétrell, as we have said, was the third power in Strasbourg, and more to be feared, perhaps, than either of the others. Citizen Fleury retired behind the curtain, and five minutes later it rose upon the first scene of "Filial Love," thus proving that Tétrell had been obeyed.

The play opens with the following well-known lines:

Young lovers, pick flowers
For the brow of your love;
Love gives sweet reward
In tender favors.

An old soldier has retired to his hut at the foot of the Alps; he was wounded on the battlefield of Nefeld, and his life was saved by another old soldier whom he has not seen since. He lives with his son, who, after having sung the four preceding lines, follows them up with these, which complete the train of thought:

Full of a sweet hope,
When the sun rises
I also pluck flowers
For my father's brow.

An occupation still more absurd for the great fellow of twenty, from the fact that the old soldier awakes before the wreath is finished, and we do not see how the water-lilies and myosotis, of which the wreath is composed, would have become him. Instead, we enjoy a duet in which the son repudiates all idea of love and marriage which the old fellow seeks to implant in him, saying only:

The sweetest love in all the world
Is the love I have for you!

But he is soon to change his mind; for while, after picking flowers for his father's brow, he is plucking fruit for breakfast, a young girl rushes upon the scene, singing:

Ah, good old man,
Ah, share my grief!

Have you seen a traveller pass this way?

This traveller, whom the girl is pursuing, is her father. The old man has not seen him; and, as she is inconsolable, she eats her breakfast and then goes to sleep; then every one else goes in search of the lost father, whom Armand, the young man who picks flowers for the paternal brow, finds all the more easily from the fact that the man he is looking for has a wooden leg and is sixty years old.

Louise's happiness at sight of her recovered father can be imagined—a happiness all the greater because Armand's father, after a short explanation is made, recognizes in him the old soldier who saved his life at the battle of Nefeld, and thereby lost the leg which royal munificence has replaced with a wooden one. This unexpected turn of fortune justifies the double title, "Filial Love, or the Wooden Leg."

As long as poor Madame Fromont's part required her to rouse the echoes of the Alps with her demands for her father, and to mourn because she had lost him, her grief and tears stood her in good stead. But as soon as she found him, the contrast between her actual and her theatrical situation, since she had lost her father forever, looked her in the face with all its appalling truth. The actress ceased to be an actress, and the woman became wholly the daughter and wife. She uttered a cry of agony, repulsed her stage father, and fell fainting into the arms of the young man, who carried her from the stage.

The curtain fell. Then a great tumult filled the hall.

The majority of the spectators took sides with poor Madame Fromont, applauding her madly, and shouted: "Enough! Enough!" Others called: "Citizeness Fromont! Citizeness Fromont!" as much with the intention of giving her an ovation as of obliging her to continue her rôle. A few malevolent ones, a few hardened Catos, Tétrell among their number, cried: "The play! The play!"

After this frightful tumult had lasted about five minutes, the curtain rose again, and the poor widow, clad in mourning garments, came out leaning upon Fleury's arm, feeling that his wound lent her some slight protection. She was scarcely able to stand as she endeavored to thank some for their manifest sympathy and to implore mercy of the others.

At sight of her the whole hall rang with shouts of applause, which would have been unanimous, if a hiss, coming from the balcony, had not protested against this general opinion. But scarcely had the hiss made itself heard than a voice from the parterre answered it with the exclamation: "Wretch!"

Tétrell turned quickly, and leaning over the balcony cried: "Who said wretch?"

"I," answered the same voice.

"And who did you call a wretch?"

"You."

"You are hiding in the parterre; just show yourself!"

A youth, scarcely fifteen years of age, sprang upon the bench with a single bound, and standing head and shoulders above the people, cried: "Here I am. I show myself, as you see."

"Eugene Beauharnais! The son of General Beauharnais!" exclaimed several spectators, who had known the general during his stay in Strasbourg, and who recognized the boy, who had also been there for some time.

General Beauharnais had been much loved, and a group gathered round the boy, whom Augereau on the one side, and Charles on the other stood ready to support.

"Whelp of an aristocrat!" cried Tétrell, on seeing who his adversary was.

"Bastard of a wolf!" retorted the youth, refusing to lower his eyes before the threatening glance of the leader of the Propagande.

"If you make me come down to you," shouted Tétrell, grinding his teeth, "you had better look out, or I will spank you."

"If you make me come up to you I will slap you," replied Eugene.

"Here, this is for you!" cried Tétrell, forcing himself to laugh, and spitting at Eugene.

"And that is for you, coward!" retorted the youth, flinging his glove, into which he had slipped a few leaden pellets, full at his antagonist.

Tétrell uttered a cry of rage, and put his hand to his cheek, which was all covered with blood.

Tétrell, in his thirst for revenge, could not stop to go round by the corridors. He pulled a pistol from his belt, aimed it at the boy, around whom a space was suddenly cleared, every one fearing to be struck by a ball from the weapon in Tétrell's trembling hand, which threatened every one in his vicinity.

But at the same moment a man wearing the uniform of the volunteers of Paris, and bearing the insignia of a sergeant's rank, threw himself between Tétrell and the boy, protecting the latter with his body, and folded his arms.

"That's all very well, citizen!" said he, "but when a man wears a sword he ought not to commit murder."

"Bravo, volunteer! bravo, sergeant!" came from every corner of the theatre.

"Do you know," he continued, "what this child, this whelp of an aristocrat, this brat, as you call him, was doing this morning while you were making fine speeches at the Propagande? He was fighting to prevent the enemy from entering Strasbourg. While you were asking for the heads of your friends, he was killing the enemies of France. Now, put up your pistol, which does not frighten me, and listen to what I have to say."

Profound silence reigned in the hall and upon the stage; the curtain was still raised, and the actors, workmen, and soldiers of the guard had gathered there. It was in the midst of this painful silence that the volunteer continued, and although he did not raise his voice he could be heard perfectly on all sides.

"What I have to say further," resumed the sergeant, stepping aside from the boy, "is that this boy, who is neither the whelp of an aristocrat, nor a brat, but a man whom victory has to-day baptized a Republican upon the field of battle—this boy, after having insulted you challenges you; after having called you a wretch, he calls you a coward, and awaits—you with your second and whatever weapon you choose to provide, unless it be your favorite weapon the guillotine, with the executioner as your second. I tell you this in his name and mine, do you hear? And I answer for him, I, Pierre Augereau, sergeant-major in the regiment of the volunteers of Paris! And now, go and hang yourself if you like. Come, citizen Eugene."

And picking up the boy he placed him on the floor, first lifting him up so high that every one in the room could see and applaud him frantically. And in the midst of these cheers and bravos, he left the hall with the two young fellows, who were escorted to the Hôtel de la Lanterne by half of the spectators, shouting: "Long live the Republic! Long live the volunteers of Paris! Down with Tétrell!"

CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH CHARLES IS ARRESTED

On hearing the tumult, which increased as the crowd approached the Hôtel de la Lanterne, Madame Teutch appeared at the door. By the light of the torches with which some of the more enthusiastic were provided, she recognized her two guests and the sergeant-major, Augereau, whom they were bringing back in triumph.

The fear which Tétrell had sown among the populace was bearing its fruits; the harvest was ripe, and he was reaping hatred.

About thirty kind-hearted men proposed to Pierre Augereau that they should watch over the safety of his pupil, thinking it very possible that Tétrell would profit by the darkness to do him an ill turn. But the sergeant-major thanked them, saying that he himself would watch over his young friend's safety, and would answer for him. But, in order to retain the goodwill of the people, which might be useful to them later, the sergeant-major thought it would be wise to offer the leaders of the escort a glass of punch, or some hot wine.

No sooner was the proposal made than they proceeded to invade the kitchen of the Lanterne, and to warm the wine, melt the sugar, and mix the beverage. It was midnight when they parted with cries of, "Long live the Republic!" interspersed with hearty handclasps, and strong oaths of alliance defensive and offensive.

But when the last one was gone, when the door was shut behind them, and the shutters closed so carefully that not even a ray of light could escape through them, Augereau grew very grave, and turning to Eugene said: "Now, my young pupil, we must think of your safety."

"What! of my safety? Didn't you just say that I had nothing to fear and that you would answer for my safety?"

"Certainly, I will answer for you, but on the condition that you do what I say."

"And what do you want me to do? I hope you don't intend to suggest some act of cowardice."

"Monsieur le Marquis," said Augereau, "I must have no more of those suspicions, or, by the Republic, you and I will quarrel."

"Come, my good Pierre, don't get angry. What do you want me to do?"

"I have no confidence in a man who disguises himself with a nose like that when it is not carnival time. In the first place, he will not fight."

"Why won't he fight?"

"Because he looks to me like a great coward."

"Yes, but suppose he does fight?"

"If he fights, there is nothing more to say; you risk only a ball or a sword-thrust. But if he doesn't, you risk having your head cut off, and that is what I wish to prevent."

"How?"

"By taking you with me to the barracks of the volunteers of Paris: he won't come after you there, I warrant."

"Hide? Never."

"Tush! My little friend," said the sergeant-major, "don't say such things before Pierre Augereau, whose courage cannot be questioned. No, you will not hide, you will simply wait there. That's all."

"What shall I wait for?"

"Citizen Tétrell's seconds."

"His seconds? He will send them here, and I won't know that they have come, since I won't be here."

"And little Charles? He runs no danger, and what was he put on earth for except to bring us word of what happens? Heavens! what a hard customer you are, and what difficulties you put in a fellow's way."

"And the first thing that happens, no matter how insignificant, you will come to the barracks and tell us, won't you,

Charles?"

"I give you my word of honor."

"And now," said Augereau, "to the left!"

"Where are we going?"

"To the barracks."

"Through the court?"

"Through the court."

"And why not by the door?"

"Because if we go by the door some curious fellow might be watching, who would follow us just for fun, to see where we were going; while if we go by the court, I know of a certain little gate that leads to a lane where nothing passes, not even a cat. From lane to lane we will reach the barracks, and no one will know where the turkeys perch."

"You will remember your promise, Charles?"

"Although I am two years younger than you, Eugene, my honor is as good as yours; and, besides, the experiences of to-day have made me feel as old as you. Good-by and sleep well; Augereau will take care of your person and I of your honor."

The two boys clasped hands; and the sergeant-major almost broke Charles's fingers, he shook them so hard; then he drew Eugene out into the court, while Charles, with a slight grimace of pain, tried to separate his fingers. This operation finished, he took his candle and the key to his room as usual, and went upstairs.

But scarcely was he in bed before Madame Teutch entered on tiptoe, making signs to him that she had something important to tell him. The boy understood Madame Teutch's mysterious ways well enough by this time not to be surprised at seeing her, even at this unheard-of hour. She approached his bed, murmuring: "Poor little cherub!"

"Well, citizeness Teutch," asked Charles, laughing, "what is it this time?"

"I must tell you what has happened, even at the risk of alarming you."

"When?"

"While you were at the play."

"Did anything happen then?"

"I should think so! We had a visit."

"From whom?"

"The men who came here before about Ballu and Dumont."

"Well, I suppose they did not find them this time either."

"They did not come for them, my pet."

"For whom did they come, then?"

"They came for you."

"For me? And to what do I owe the honor of their visit?"

"It seems that they are looking for the author of that little note."

"In which I told them to get away as soon as possible?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Well, they visited your room, and searched through all your papers."

"That does not alarm me. They found nothing against the Republic."

"No, but they found one act of a tragedy."

"Ah! my tragedy of 'Théramène.'"

"They took it with them."

"The wretches! Fortunately I know it by heart."

"But do you know why they took it with them?"

"Because they found the verses to their taste, I presume."

"No, because they saw that the writing in the note was the same as that of the manuscript."

"Ah! this is getting serious."

"You know the law, my poor child; any one who gives shelter to a suspect, or helps him to escape—"

"Yes; it means death."

"Just hear the poor little fellow; he says that as he would, 'Yes, bread and jam.'"

"I say it thus, dear Madame Teutch, because it cannot possibly affect me."

"What can't affect you?"

"The death penalty."

"Why can't it affect you?"

"Because one must be sixteen years old to aspire to the honor of the guillotine."

"Are you sure, my poor child?"

"I have taken care to inform myself on the point. Besides, yesterday I read on the walls a new decree of citizen Saint-Just, forbidding the execution of any judgment until the account of the trial has been communicated to him, and he has questioned the convicted person. However—"

"What?" asked Madame Teutch.

"Wait. Here, give me some paper, and a pen and ink."

Charles took up a pen, and wrote:

Citizen Saint-Just, I have just been illegally arrested, and, having faith in your justice, I demand to be brought before you.

And he signed it.

"There, Madame Teutch," said he. "It is well to foresee every emergency in these times. If I am arrested, you must send that note to citizen Saint-Just."

"Good Lord! Poor little fellow, if such a mishap should befall you, I promise you to take it myself, and even if I have to wait all night in the anteroom I won't give it to any one but him."

"That is all that is necessary; and on the strength of that, citizeness Teutch, kiss me and sleep well—I will try to do the same."

Madame Teutch kissed her guest, and went away, murmuring: "In God's truth, there are no more children; here is one challenging citizen Tétrell, and the other demanding to be brought before citizen Saint-Just!"

Madame Teutch closed the door. Charles blew out the light and went to sleep.

The next morning, about eight o'clock, he was busy arranging his papers, which were more or less in disorder from the visitation of the previous night, when citizeness Teutch rushed into his room, crying: "Here they are! here they are!"

"Who?" asked Charles.

"The police, who have come to arrest you, poor dear child!"

Charles quickly concealed in the bosom of his shirt the second letter which his father had given him—the one to

Pichegru; for he feared that it might be taken from him and not returned.

The police entered and informed the boy of the object of their visit. Charles declared himself ready to follow them.

As he passed the citizeness Teutch, he gave her a look, which signified: "Don't forget!"

She replied by a slight movement of the head, which meant: "Don't be afraid."

The police led the way on foot.

They were obliged to pass before Euloge Schneider's house in order to reach the prison. For a moment Charles thought of asking to be led before the man to whom he had brought a letter of recommendation, and with whom he had dined the day previous; but he saw the guillotine before the door, and near it an empty carriage, while on the doorstep stood Master Nicholas. Remembering what had occurred there, he shook his head in disgust, murmuring as he did so: "Poor Mademoiselle de Brumpt! God help her!"

The boy believed in God; it is true he was but a child.

CHAPTER X

SCHNEIDER'S JOURNEY

Scarcely had Charles and the men who were conducting him passed Schneider's door than it opened, and the Commissioner of the Republic came out, glanced tenderly at the instrument of death, packed neatly in a cart, made a slight sign of friendly greeting to Master Nicholas, and got into the empty carriage. Standing there for an instant, he said to Master Nicholas: "And you?"

The latter pointed to a sort of cab that was rapidly approaching which contained two men, his assistants; the cab was his own conveyance.

Everything was in readiness—the accuser, the executioner, and the guillotine.

The procession began its march through the streets leading to the Kehl gate, which opened on the road to Plobsheim. Everywhere they passed, terror, with its icy wings, passed also. Those who were standing at their doors went inside; those who were walking, hugged the walls and wished they could slip through them. A few fanatics alone waved their hats, and cried: "Long live the guillotine!" which meant, "Long live death!" but, to the honor of humanity, it must be admitted that these individuals were greatly in the minority.

Schneider's customary escort, eight of the Hussars of Death, were waiting for him at the gate.

In each village that Schneider came to on the road, he made a halt, striking terror into the hearts of the people thereby. As soon as the lugubrious procession had stopped in the public square, Schneider sent word that he was ready to listen to any denunciations that should be made to him. He heard the accusations, interrogated the mayor and the trembling municipal counsellors, ordered the arrests, and left the village behind him as sad and desolate as if it had been visited by the plague or the yellow fever.

The village of Eschau was to the right, and a little to one side of the road. Its inhabitants therefore hoped to be spared the terrible visitation. But they were mistaken.

Schneider turned into the crossroad, which was gullied by rain, through which his carriage and that of Master Nicholas passed easily, thanks to their light construction. But the cart which bore the red machine stuck fast in the mud.

Schneider sent four Hussars of Death to look after the men and horses. The men and the horses were somewhat delayed; the enthusiasm for this funereal work was not great. Schneider was furious; he threatened to remain permanently at Eschau and to guillotine the whole village. And he could have done so if he had chosen, so supreme was the omnipotence of these terrible dictators.

This explains the massacres of Collot-d'Herbois at Lyons, and of Carrier at Nantes. The lust of blood took possession of them, just as eighteen hundred years before it had taken possession of Nero, Commodus, and Domitian.

At last, with the combined efforts of men and horses, they succeeded in dragging the cart out of the ruts, and entered the village.

The mayor, his deputy, and the municipal counsellors were awaiting Schneider at the end of the street. Schneider surrounded them with his Hussars of Death without listening to a word they had to say.

It was market day; he stopped on the great square, and ordered the guillotine set up before the eyes of the terrified people. Then he gave the order to tie the mayor to one of the pillars of the guillotine, and the deputy to the other, while all the counsellors stood upon the platform. He had invented this sort of pillory for all those who in his opinion did not deserve the extreme sentence, death.

It was noon, and the dinner-hour. He entered an inn which was opposite the scaffold, had his table set on the balcony, and, guarded by four Hussars of Death, ate his dinner there.

At dessert he rose and lifted his glass, crying: "Long live the Republic! Death to the aristocrats!" When the spectators had repeated his cry, even those who were gazing at him in fear from the top of the scaffold, not knowing what was to be done with them, he said: "It is well; I pardon you."

And he ordered the mayor and his deputy to be untied, and permitted the municipal body to descend from the platform, commanding them, in the interest of "equality and fraternity," to help the executioner and his assistants to take down the

guillotine and load it upon the cart, after which he made them escort him in triumph to the other end of the village.

They reached Plobsheim about three in the afternoon. At the first house Schneider asked the way to the dwelling of the Comte de Brumpt. They pointed it out to him.

He lived in the Rue de Rhin, the most spacious and pleasant street in the town. When they reached the house, Schneider ordered them to set up the guillotine before it, and leaving four hussars to guard the scaffold, he went away, taking the other four with him.

He stopped at the hotel of the "Phrygian Cap," formerly the "White Cross."

From there he wrote as follows:

To the citizen Brumpt at the town-prison:

Upon giving your written word of honor not to escape, you are free. But you will invite me to dinner to-morrow at noon, because I must talk to you on important business.

EULOGIE SCHNEIDER.

He sent the letter to the Comte de Brumpt by one of his hussars. Ten minutes later the man brought the answer:

I give my parole to the citizen Schneider to return to my own house, and not to leave it without his permission.

I shall be much pleased to receive him at dinner to-morrow, at the hour named.

BRUMPT.

CHAPTER XI

THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL

At sight of the horrible machine, which stood before her house, Mademoiselle de Brumpt ordered all the windows in the front closed.

When Comte de Brumpt, leaving the prison without guards and on his own parole, arrived within sight of his own house, he found it shut like a sepulchre, with the scaffold before it. He asked himself what it meant and whether he dared go forward. But this hesitation did not last long; neither scaffold nor tomb could hold him back. He walked straight to the door and knocked in his accustomed manner—two blows in quick succession, and a third after a long interval.

Clotilde had retired with Madame Gerard, her companion, to a room in the back of the house overlooking the garden. She was lying among the sofa-cushions and weeping, so ominous did Schneider's answer to her petition seem to her. When she heard the first two strokes of the knocker she uttered a cry, at the third she sprang to her feet.

"My God!" she cried.

Madame Gerard turned pale.

"If your father were not a prisoner," she said, "I would swear that was his knock."

Clotilde darted toward the stairs.

"That is his step," she murmured.

She heard a voice below, asking: "Clotilde, where are you?"

"My father! my father!" cried the young girl, rushing down the stairs.

The count was waiting for her below, and received her in his arms. "My daughter! my daughter!" he murmured, "what does this mean?"

"I don't know myself."

"But what is the meaning of this scaffold before the house, and why are all the windows closed?"

"Schneider had the scaffold put up there, and I ordered all the windows closed; I shut them that I might not have to see you die."

"But it was Schneider who opened the door of my prison for me, and let me go on my own recognizance, at the same time inviting himself to dinner to-morrow."

"My father," said Clotilde, "perhaps I did wrong, but you must blame my love for you. When you were arrested I hastened to Strasbourg and asked for your release."

"Of Schneider?"

"Of Schneider."

"Poor child! And at what price did he grant it?"

"Papa, the price is yet to be agreed upon between us. Doubtless, he will tell us the conditions to-morrow."

"We will wait for them."

Clotilde took her prayer-book and went to a little church so humble that it had not been thought necessary to deprive the Lord of it. She prayed there until evening.

The guillotine remained standing all night.

The next day at noon, Schneider presented himself at the Comte de Brumpt's house.

In spite of the advanced season of the year the house was filled with flowers. It would have seemed like a gala day, had not Clotilde's mourning contradicted the impression, as the snow in the street contradicted the spring within.

The count and his daughter received Schneider. He had not taken the name of Euloge for nothing. At the end of ten minutes Clotilde asked herself if this could be the man who had received her so brutally at Strasbourg.

The count, reassured, left the room to attend to some arrangements. Schneider offered his arm to the young girl, and led her to the window, which he opened.

The guillotine stood opposite, gayly decked with flowers and ribbons.

"Take your choice," he said, "between a scaffold and the altar."

"What do you mean?" asked Clotilde, trembling.

"To-morrow you must either be my wife or the count must die."

Clotilde blanched to the color of the white cambric handkerchief which she held in her hand.

"My father would prefer to die," she replied.

"And therefore I leave it to you to acquaint him with my request."

"You are right," said Clotilde, "that would be the only way."

Schneider closed the window and led Mademoiselle de Brumpton back to her chair.

Clotilde drew a flask of salts from her pocket and held it to her nose. By a supreme effort of the will, her face regained its usual calm expression, although it was very sad, and the roses which had seemed to fade from her cheeks forever, bloomed there anew. She had evidently made up her mind.

The count returned. He was followed by a servant, who announced dinner.

A magnificent repast was served, messengers having been sent in the night to Strasbourg to bring back the finest game and the rarest fish that the market afforded.

The count, somewhat reassured, did the honors of his table to the commissioner of the Republic, with all the delicacy of the old nobility. They drank in turn the best wines of the Rhine, of Germany, and of Hungary. The pale betrothed alone ate little, and from time to time moistened her lips with a glass of water.

But at the end of the dinner she held out her glass to the count who, much astonished, filled it with Tokay wine. Then she rose, and lifting her glass, said: "To Euloge Schneider, the generous man to whom I owe my father's life; happy and proud will be the woman whom he chooses for his wife."

"Beautiful Clotilde," cried Schneider in delight, "have you not guessed that that woman is yourself, and do I need to tell you that I love you?"

Clotilde gently touched her glass to his, and then went and knelt before her father, who was overwhelmed with astonishment.

"Father," she said, "I beg you to give me for husband the kind man to whom I owe your life, and I call Heaven to witness that I will not rise until you have granted me that favor."

The count looked alternately at Schneider, whose face shone with joy, and at Clotilde, whose brow reflected the light of martyrdom. He understood that something was taking place so grand and sublime that he had no right to oppose it.

"My daughter," he said, "you are mistress of your hand and fortune; do as you will, for whatever you do will be well done."

Clotilde rose and held out her hand to Schneider. The latter seized it eagerly, while Clotilde, with uplifted face, seemed to be seeking God, and wondering that such infamies could take place beneath his holy gaze.

But when Schneider raised his head from her hand, her face had regained the serenity that it had lost for a moment in that silent appeal to the Almighty. Then, as Schneider begged her to name the day that should set a seal to his happiness, she pressed his hand and said with a smile:

"Listen, Schneider; I beg of your tenderness one of those favors which a man cannot refuse to his betrothed. Some pride mingles with my happiness. It is not in Plobsheim, a poor village of Alsace, that the first of our citizens should give his name to the woman whom he loves and whom he has chosen. I desire that the people should recognize me for Schneider's wife and not for his concubine. In every town you have been accompanied by a mistress, and the mistake might easily be made. It is only fifteen miles to Strasbourg. I must make some preparations for my trousseau, for I wish it to be worthy of the bridegroom. To-morrow, at any hour you like, we will go alone, or accompanied, before the citizens,

the generals, and the representatives."^[1]

I have not changed one word of this request, which I have copied from Charles Nodier's "Souvenirs de la Révolution."

"I am willing," cried Schneider; "I will agree to anything that you like, on one condition."

"What is it?"

"It is that we start to-day instead of to-morrow."

"Impossible," said Clotilde, growing pale. "It is now half-past one and the gates of the city close at three."

"Then they shall be closed at four!" And summoning two of his hussars, lest an accident befall one or the other on the road, he said: "Ride at full speed to Strasbourg, and tell them not to shut the Kehl gate until four o'clock. You will remain at the gate and see that my orders are executed."

"All must be as you wish," said Clotilde, laying her hand in Schneider's. "Certainly, papa, I have every prospect of being a happy bride."

CHAPTER XII

SAINT-JUST

The night passed, as we have seen, without anything being heard from Tétrell; the day passed also. At five o'clock in the afternoon, as they had received no news, Eugene and Augereau resolved to go where they could get some information. They returned to the Hôtel de la Lanterne, and there they heard some indeed.

Madame Teutch, in despair, told them that her little Charles had been arrested at eight o'clock in the morning, and taken to prison. All day she had waited to see Saint-Just, and had been unable to do so until five o'clock in the afternoon, when she had given him Charles's note.

Saint-Just had said to her: "Very well, if what you have told me is true he shall be set at liberty to-morrow."

Madame Teutch had come away with some slight hope; citizen Saint-Just did not seem as ferocious as he was reported to be.

Charles, although he was sure of his innocence, since he had never had anything to do with politics in his whole life, grew impatient as the day passed without bringing him any news; but his impatience changed to uneasiness when the whole morning of the next day passed and the representative of the people did not send for him.

Saint-Just was not to blame, for he was one of the most scrupulous men in the world where a promise was concerned. A grand tour of inspection had been decided upon for the next day at dawn, that he might ascertain whether the orders he had given were being carried out. He did not return to his hotel until one o'clock, and then, remembering the promise he had given, he sent word to the prison that little Charles should be brought to him.

Saint-Just had been wet to the skin during the morning's excursion, and when the boy entered his room he was just putting the finishing touches to his fresh toilet by tying his cravat.

The cravat, as is well known, was the essential point of Saint-Just's toilet. It was a scaffolding of muslin from which rose a handsome head, and it was partially intended to conceal the immense development of the jaws, which is often noticeable in beasts of prey and in conquerors. The most remarkable feature about Saint-Just's face was his large, limpid eyes, earnest, deep, and questioning, shadowed by heavy eyebrows which met above the nose whenever he frowned in impatience or, preoccupation. He had the pale complexion of that grayish tint so common to many of those laborious toilers of the Revolution, who, fearing a premature death, added nights to days in order to finish the terrible work which the genius that watches over the grandeur of nations, and which we dare call Providence, had intrusted to them. His lips were soft and fleshy, as befitted those of the sensual man whose first literary effort had expressed itself in an obscene book, but who, by a prodigious effort of will, had succeeded in dominating his temperament, and in imposing upon himself a life of continence as far as women were concerned. While adjusting his cravat, or arranging the silky ends of his magnificent hair, he dictated to a secretary the orders, decrees, laws, and judgments which were destined to cover the walls of the most frequented squares, crossroads, and streets of Strasbourg, and which were posted in two languages.

In fact, so great was the sovereign, absolute, and aristocratic power of the representatives of the people who were sent to the armies, that they thought no more of cutting off heads than of switching off the top of some wayside plant. But that which rendered the style of Saint-Just's decrees remarkable was their conciseness and the brief, sonorous, and vibrating voice in which he pronounced them. The first time that he spoke in the Convention, he demanded the king's arrest; and at the first words of the speech, cold, sharp, and cutting as steel, there was not one present who did not feel with a shudder that the king was doomed.

When his cravat was tied Saint-Just turned to put on his coat, and saw the boy who was waiting.

He looked at him, trying to remember who he was; and then, suddenly pointing to the mantel-piece, he asked: "Was it you whom they arrested yesterday morning, and who sent me a note by the landlady of your inn?"

"Yes, citizen," answered Charles; "it was I."

"Then the men who arrested you allowed you to write to me?"

"I wrote before I was arrested."

"How was that?"

"I knew that I was going to be arrested."

"And you did not hide yourself?"

"What for? I was innocent, and they say that you are just."

Saint-Just looked at the boy in silence. He himself looked very young just then, with his shirt of whitest linen and large sleeves, his white waistcoat, and his artistically tied cravat.

"Are your parents emigrants?"

"No, citizen; my parents are not aristocrats."

"What are they?"

"My father presides over the tribunal of Besamjon, and my uncle is commander of a battalion."

"How old are you?"

"A little over thirteen."

"Come nearer."

The boy obeyed.

"Upon my word, it's true," said Saint-Just; "he looks like a little girl. But you must have done something to be arrested."

"Two of my compatriots, citizens Ballu and Dumont, came to Strasbourg to secure the release of Adjutant-General Perrin. I knew that they were to be arrested during the night, and I sent them a little note of warning. My handwriting was recognized. I thought I was doing right. I appeal to your heart, citizen Saint-Just!"

Saint-Just placed his hand, which was as white and well cared for as that of a woman, upon the boy's shoulder.

"You are still a child," he replied, "and I will only say this: There is a sentiment even more holy than love of one's countrymen; it is love of one's country. Before being citizens of the same town we are children of the same country. A day will come when reason will have advanced sufficiently to value humanity more than patriotism, when all men will be brothers, all nations as sisters, when tyrants will be the only enemies. You yielded to an honorable sentiment, the love of your neighbor, which is enjoined by the Evangelist; but in yielding to it you have forgotten a sentiment which is yet higher, more sacred, more sublime. Devotion to your country should come before everything else. If these men were enemies of their country, if they had transgressed its laws, you should not have interfered between them and the knife. I have no right to set myself up as an example, being one of the humblest servants of liberty; but I serve her according to my ability, I cause her to triumph whenever it lies within my power to do so; that is my sole ambition. Why am I to-day so calm and so proud of myself? It is because I have this very day, at the price of my own heart's blood, given a proof of respect for the law which I myself made."

He paused a moment to make sure that the child was listening attentively. The boy did not lose a syllable. On the contrary, as if already preparing to transmit them to posterity, he was storing in his memory the words which fell from that strong mouth. Saint-Just continued:

"Since the shameful panic of Eisemberg, I issued a decree which forbade any soldier or officer to go to bed without being fully clothed. Well, on my tour of inspection this morning I looked forward to meeting a friend from my own part of the country, coming, like me, from the department of the Aisne; like me, from Blérancourt; and, like me again, a pupil in the college of Soissons. His regiment arrived yesterday, in the village of Schiltigheim. I directed my course therefore toward the village, and asked in what house Prosper Lenormand was lodged. It was pointed out to me, and I hastened thither. His room was on the first floor, and, although I have great control over myself, my heart beat high, as I mounted the stairs, at the thought of seeing my friend again after five years of separation. I entered the first room, calling out: 'Prosper! Prosper! Where are you? It is your old chum, Saint-Just.'

"I had no sooner spoken than the door opened, and a young man, clad only in his night-shirt, threw himself into my arms, crying: 'Saint-Just; my dear Saint-Just!'

"I wept as I pressed him to my heart, for that heart was about to receive a terrible blow.

"The friend of my childhood, whom I now saw for the first time after five years—he whom I had sought out myself, so eager was I to meet him again—he had violated the law which I had promulgated only three days before. He had

incurred the death penalty.

"Then my heart yielded before the power of my will, and, turning to those present, I said calmly: 'Heaven be doubly praised, since I have seen you again, and since I can give, in the person of one so dear to me, a memorable lesson of discipline and a grand example of justice by sacrificing you to the public safety.'

"Then, speaking to those who accompanied me, I said: 'Do your duty.'

"I then embraced Prosper for the last time, and at a sign from me they conducted him out of the room."

"What for?" asked Charles.

"To shoot him. Was he not forbidden, under penalty of death, to go to bed with his clothes off?"

"But you pardoned him?" asked Charles, moved to tears.

"Ten minutes later he was dead."

Charles uttered a cry of terror.

"Your heart is still weak, poor child; read Plutarch and you will become a man. And what are you doing in Strasbourg?"

"I am studying, citizen," replied the child. "I have only been here three days."

"And what are you studying in Strasbourg?"

"Greek."

"It seems to me it would be more logical to study German. Besides, of what use is Greek, since the Lacedæmonians have written nothing?" Then, after a moment of silence, during which he continued to look curiously at the boy, he asked: "And who is the learned man who gives lessons in Greek in Strasbourg?"

"Euloge Schneider," answered Charles.

"What! Euloge Schneider knows Greek?" asked Saint-Just.

"He is one of the first Greek scholars of the day; he has translated Anacreon."

"The Monk of Cologne," exclaimed Saint-Just. "Euloge Schneider a Greek scholar! Well, so be it; go learn Greek of Euloge Schneider. But if I thought," he continued in a quivering voice, "that you would learn anything else of him I would rather strangle you."

Stunned by this outburst, the boy stood silent and motionless, leaning against the wall like a tapestried figure.

"Oh!" cried Saint-Just, becoming more and more excited, "it is traffickers like him, with his Greek, who destroy the holy cause of the Revolution. It is they who send forth mandates to arrest children thirteen years of age because they lodge in the same inn where the police have found two suspected travellers. It is thus that these wretches seek to curry favor with the Mountain. Ah, I swear to Heaven that I will soon do justice to these attempts which endanger our most precious liberties. There is urgent need of prompt justice, which shall serve as an example; I will execute it. They dare to reproach me with not giving them enough corpses to devour. I will give them some! The Propagande wishes blood! It shall have it. And, to begin with, I will bathe it in the blood of its leaders. If I can only find a pretext, if I can only have justice on my side, they shall see!"

Saint-Just, losing his cold calmness, became terrible in his threats; his eyebrows met and his nostrils dilated like those of a hunted lion; his complexion turned ashen; he seemed to be looking for something animate or inanimate to crush.

Just then a messenger, who had recently dismounted, as could be seen from the splashes of mud flecking his garments, entered precipitately, and, approaching Saint-Just, said a few words to him in an undertone. At these words an expression of joy, mingled with doubt, flitted across the representative's face. The news which had just been brought to him was so welcome that he dared not believe it.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WEDDING OF EULOGE SCHNEIDER

Saint-Just looked the man over from head to foot, as if to make sure that he was not dealing with a madman.

"And you come, you say—" he asked.

"From your colleague Lebas."

"To tell me—"

The man lowered his voice again so that Charles could not hear what he said; as for the secretary, he had long since gone out to carry Saint-Just's decrees to the printer.

"Impossible," said the pro-consul, passing from hope to doubt; for the thing appeared incredible to him.

"Nevertheless, it is so," replied the messenger.

"But he would never dare!" said Saint-Just, setting his teeth and allowing a glance of hatred to escape his eyes.

"It is the Hussars of Death themselves who are guarding the gate and who will not allow it to be shut."

"The Kehl gate?"

"The Kehl gate."

"The very one that faces the enemy?"

"Yes, that very one."

"In spite of my formal order?"

"In spite of your formal order."

"And what reason have the Hussars of Death given for preventing that gate from being closed at three o'clock, when there is a formal order that all the gates of Strasbourg shall be shut at that hour under pain of death to him who prevents it?"

"They say that the Commissioner of the Republic is to return to the city by that gate with his betrothed."

"Euloge Schneider's betrothed? The betrothed of the Monk of Cologne?"

Saint-Just looked around him, evidently seeking Charles in the shadows which were beginning to darken the apartment.

"If you are looking for me, citizen Saint-Just, here I am," said the youth, approaching him.

"Yes, come here! Have you heard that your Greek professor is about to be married?"

Mademoiselle de Brumpt's story recurred at once to the boy's mind.

"It would take too long to tell you what I think."

"No, tell me," said Saint-Just, laughing; "we have plenty of time."

Charles related the story of the dinner at Euloge Schneider's, together with the episode of the young girl and that of the executioner. As he listened, Saint-Just's head remained motionless, but the rest of his body quivered unceasingly.

Suddenly a great hubbub was heard in one of the streets leading from the Kehl gate to the town-hall.

Doubtless Saint-Just divined the cause of this commotion, for, turning to Charles, he said: "If you would like to go, my child, you are free to do so; but if you would like to be present at a great act of justice, remain."

Charles's curiosity forbade him to go, and he remained.

The messenger went to the window and drew aside the curtain. "There," said he, "there is the proof that I was not mistaken."

"Open the window," said Saint-Just.

The messenger obeyed. The window opened upon a balcony which hung over the street. Saint-Just went out, and, at his

invitation, Charles and the messenger followed him.

The clock struck. Saint-Just turned around; it was four o'clock. The procession was just entering the square.

Four couriers, dressed in the national colors, preceded the carriage, which was drawn by six white horses and uncovered in spite of the threatening weather. Euloge was seated in it with his betrothed, who was richly dressed and dazzling in her youth and beauty. His customary escort, the black horsemen, the Hussars of Death, caracoled around the carriage with drawn swords, with which they struck those who were curious enough to approach too near. Behind them came a low cart, with large wheels painted red, drawn by two horses decorated with the tri-color ribbons, and loaded with planks, posts, and steps, painted red like the rest. The two sinister-looking men in charge of it, with their black trousers and the fatal "red bonnet" with its large cockade, were exchanging rather doleful pleasantries with the Hussars of Death. The rear of the procession was brought up by a small carriage, in which a small, grave, thin man was sitting, at whom the people pointed curiously, designating him simply as "Master Nicholas." The procession was accompanied by a double row of men bearing torches.

Schneider was coming to present his betrothed to Saint-Just, who, as we have seen, had gone out upon the balcony to meet them.

Saint-Just, calm, stern, and cold as the statue of Justice, was not popular: he was feared and respected. So that when he appeared on the balcony dressed as a representative of the people, with his plumed hat, the tri-color sash round his waist, and the sword at his side which he knew how to use with such good effect upon occasion, there were neither cries nor cheers, but a cold whispering and a backward movement, which left a great lighted circle in the midst of the crowd, into which the carriage of the betrothed couple drove slowly, followed by the cart bearing the guillotine and the cab with the executioner.

Saint-Just made a sign with his hand for the procession to stop, and the crowd, as we have said, not only stopped, but drew back.

Every one thought that Saint-Just was about to speak first; and in fact, after the imperative gesture which he made with supreme dignity, he had intended to speak, when, to the astonishment of all, the young girl opened the door of the carriage with a rapid movement, sprang to the ground, closed the door, and, falling on her knees on the pavement, cried suddenly in the midst of the solemn silence: "Justice, citizen! I appeal to Saint-Just and to the Convention for justice!"

"Against whom?" asked Saint-Just, in his quivering, incisive voice.

"Against this man, against Euloge Schneider, against the special commissioner of the Republic!"

"Speak; what has he done?" replied Saint-Just; "Justice listens to you."

Then, in a voice full of emotion, but strong, indignant, and menacing, the young girl related all the hideous drama—the death of her mother, her father's arrest, the scaffold reared before her house, the alternative which had been offered her; and at each terrible climax, to which Saint-Just listened without seeming able to credit them, she turned to the executioner, the assistants, the Hussars of Death, for confirmation; even to Schneider himself. And each one to whom she appealed replied: "Yes, it is true!" Except Schneider, who, crushed and crouching like a jaguar ready to spring, assented only by his silence.

Saint-Just, gnawing at his finger-tips, let her finish, and then, when she had ended, he said: "You ask justice, citizeness Brumpt, and you shall have it. But what would you have done if I had not been willing to grant it?"

She drew a dagger from her breast.

"To-night, in bed," she said, "I would have stabbed him. Charlotte Corday has taught us how to treat a Marat! But now," she added, "now that I am free to weep for my mother and to console my father, I ask mercy for that man."

At the word "mercy," Saint-Just started as if he had been bitten by a serpent.

"Mercy for him!" he cried, striking the railing of the balcony with his fist. "Mercy for this execrable man! mercy for the Monk of Cologne! You are jesting, young woman. If I should do that, Justice would spread her wings and fly away never to return. Mercy for him!" Then, in a terrible voice which was heard for a great distance around, he cried: "To the guillotine!"

The pale, thin, serious man got down from his cab, approached the balcony, and, taking off his hat with a bow, said: "Shall I behead him, citizen Saint-Just?"

"Unfortunately I have no right to order that; if I had, Humanity would be avenged within a quarter of an hour. No, as special commissioner he must appear before the revolutionary tribunal, and not before me. No, apply to him the torture he himself has invented; tie him to the guillotine. Shame here and death yonder!"

And with a gesture of supreme power he stretched out his arm toward Paris.

Then, as if he had finished his part in the drama, he pushed the messenger, who had informed him of the violation of his orders, and little Charles, whom by another act of justice he had just set free, into the room before him, and closed the window. Laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, he said: "Never forget what you have seen; and if any one ever says in your presence that Saint-Just is not a lover of the Revolution, of liberty, and of justice, say aloud that that is not true. And now go where you like; you are free."

Charles, in a transport of youthful admiration, tried to kiss Saint-Just's hand; but the latter drew it back hastily, and, leaning over Charles, kissed him on the forehead.

Forty years later, Charles, now a man, said to me, while relating the scene and urging me to make a book of it, that he could still in memory feel the impression that kiss had made upon him.



CHAPTER XIV

WISHES

When Charles went down he could view the whole scene at a single glance from the doorstep. Mademoiselle de Brumpt, in haste, no doubt, to place herself in safety, and anxious to reassure her father, had disappeared. The two men with the red caps and the black blouses were setting up the scaffold with a promptitude which evinced great familiarity with the task. Master Nicholas held Schneider by the arm; the latter refused to descend from the carriage, and the two Hussars of Death, seeing the situation, went around to the other door, and began to prick him with the points of their sabres. A cold, icy rain was falling, which penetrated the clothing like needles, yet Schneider was wiping the sweat from his dripping brow. Half-way from the carriage to the guillotine they took off his hat because of the national cockade, and then his coat because it was that of a soldier. Cold and terror made the unhappy man shiver as he ascended the steps of the guillotine.

Then a cry sprang from ten thousand throats which sounded as one—"Under the knife! Under the knife!"

"My God!" murmured Charles, quivering with terror as he leaned against the wall, and yet rooted to the spot by an unconquerable curiosity, "are they going to kill him? are they going to kill him?"

"No, don't worry," replied a voice, "he will get off with a fright this time. But it would do no great harm to finish him up at once."

Charles recognized the voice immediately; he turned his head in the direction whence it came and perceived Sergeant Augereau.

"Ah!" he exclaimed joyfully, as if he himself had escaped a great danger; "ah, it is you, my worthy friend! And Eugene?"

"Safe and sound like yourself. We went back to the hotel yesterday, and there we learned of your arrest. I hurried to the prison and found that you were there; when I returned at one o'clock you were still there. At three, I heard that Saint-Just had sent for you, so I made up my mind to wait here in the square till you came out, for I was very sure that he would not eat you. All at once I saw you near him at the window, and, as you seemed to be on the best terms possible with each other, I was reassured. And now you are free?"

"Free as the air."

"There is nothing to keep you here any longer?"

"I only wish I had not come."

"I don't agree with you. It seems to me a good thing to be friends with Saint-Just, even better than with Schneider, especially now that he is the stronger. As for Schneider, you didn't have time to become very much attached to him; so you will probably not be inconsolable over his loss. What has happened this evening will be a warning to Tétrell, who, by the way, has not budged, but who must not be allowed the time to take his revenge."

Just then they heard a confusion of cries, cheers and shouts.

"Oh! what is that?" cried Charles, hiding his head on his friend's breast.

"Nothing," replied Augereau, raising himself upon the tips of his toes. "Nothing, except that they are fastening him under the knife—doing to him just what he did yesterday to the mayor and the deputy at Eschau; each one in his turn. Fortunate are those, my good friend, who come from that place with their heads on their shoulders."

"Terrible! terrible!" murmured Charles.

"Terrible, yes; but we see that or worse every day. Say good-by to your worthy professor; you will probably never see him again, as they are going to send him to Paris as soon as they take him down from that platform, and I don't envy him his promotion. And now let us go and get some supper. You must be starved, my poor boy!"

"I never thought of that," said Charles; "but now that you remind me of it, I remember that it is a far cry from breakfast."

"All the more reason to return to the Hôtel de la Lanterne as soon as possible."

"Come on, then."

Charles glanced at the square a last time.

"Farewell! poor friend of my father," he said. "When he sent me to you he believed that you were still the good and learned monk whom he had known. He did not know that you had become the bloody tyrant that I have found you, and that the spirit of the Lord had departed from you. *Quos vult perdere Jupiter dementat*. Come."

This time it was the boy who hurried Pierre Augereau toward the Hôtel de la Lanterne.

Two persons were anxiously awaiting Charles's return; Madame Teutch and Eugene.

Madame Teutch, in her double rôle of hostess and woman, began by fondling Charles, and it was not until she had looked him all over, to convince herself that it was indeed he, and had kissed him to make sure that he was not a ghost, that she gave him to Eugene.

The greetings of the two young friends were equally tender though less demonstrative. Nothing binds friendship so rapidly as dangers shared in common; and since they had known each other, events had not been wanting to lead their friendship to a point equalled only by the ancients.

This friendship was further increased by the knowledge that they were soon to part. It was imprudent for Eugene, who had, moreover, nearly finished his researches, to remain longer in Strasbourg, where he was exposed to the vengeance of Tétrell, who might brood over the insult he had received for a certain time, but who would surely not forget it. As for Charles, there was no further reason for him to remain in Strasbourg once Schneider was no longer there, since he had come to the city for the sole purpose of studying under him.

Eugene was, therefore, to return to Paris, where his mother and sister were working for the liberation of his father; and Charles, utilizing the second letter that his father had given him, was to enter upon his military apprenticeship, instead of becoming Euloge Schneider's pupil.

It was agreed that the two boys should set out the next morning at daybreak. This resolution drove Madame Teutch to despair, for, as she said, she felt as if she had a little family, and she loved them as if they were her own children. But she was too reasonable to attempt to delay, much less to prevent, a departure which she knew to be inevitable and, above all, urgent. She entered therefore into all their plans; the only condition that she made was that she herself might be allowed to give them the last meal that they were to take in her house.

Not only was the offer accepted, but the young comrades, who regarded Madame Teutch, if not as a mother, at least as a friend, insisted that she should do the honors of the repast; an invitation which pleased her so greatly that she immediately gave orders to the cook for the best supper he could provide, and then hastened up to her room to don the handsomest gown she possessed.

And as the supper preparations and Madame Teutch's toilet would consume at least half an hour, the two boys decided to employ that time in making ready for their departure.

The Paris diligence, in which Eugene had engaged a place, was to start at daybreak. Charles intended to accompany his friend to the diligence and then to start for Auenheim, where Pichegru had his headquarters.

Auenheim is some twenty-four miles distant from Strasbourg. It was one of the eight or ten fortresses which, like advance sentinels, watched over the safety of the frontiers around Strasbourg.

Charles had need of a good night's rest to prepare for such a fatiguing journey. And it was to secure an uninterrupted sleep that Madame Teutch advised the boys to look over their papers and to pack their trunks before supper.

In the meantime Augereau went to the barracks to leave word that, as he was to sup in the city, he did not know when he would return that evening, if he returned at all. As fencing-master he enjoyed many advantages over the other volunteers of Paris, who in their turn possessed immunities which the soldiers of the country were not allowed.

The two boys left the communicating door between their rooms open, so that they could still talk with each other, although each was in his own room.

Now that they were to part, each planned out his future as he intended it to be.

"I," said Eugene, as he classified his military documents, "shall never be anything but a soldier. I know but little Latin, for which I have a strong dislike, and still less Greek, of which I don't understand a word. On the other hand, give me a horse, I don't care what it is, and I can ride it; I can hit the bull's-eye at twenty paces every time, and Augereau had told you himself that I need fear no one with sword or sabre. As soon as I hear a drum or a trumpet, my heart beats and the blood rushes to my head. I shall certainly be a soldier like my father. Who knows? Perhaps I shall become a general like

him. It's fine to be a general."

"Yes," replied Charles, "but just see to what that leads; look at your father. You are sure that he is innocent, are you not?"

"Of course I am!"

"Well, he is in danger of being exiled, or even of being put to death, as you told me."

"Pooh! Themistocles took part in the battles of Marathon and Salamis, and he died in exile. Exile, when it is undeserved, makes a hero of a general. When death strikes the innocent it makes of the hero a demigod. Wouldn't you like to be Phocion, even at the risk of having to drink hemlock like him?"

"Hemlock for hemlock," replied Charles, "I would rather drink that of Socrates; he is the hero for me."

"Ah! I don't dispute that! He began by being a soldier; at Potidæa he saved Alcibiades' life, and at Delium, that of Xenophon. Saving a man's life, Charles, was the act for which the Romans bestowed their most beautiful crown—the crown of oak."

"To save the life of two men, and to make sixty thousand perish, as Phocion, of whom you spoke just now, did in the forty-five battles which he fought, do you think that would be sufficient compensation?"

"Upon my word, yes, when those two men were Alcibiades and Xenophon."

"I am not as ambitious as you," said Charles, with a sigh. "You want to be an Alexander, a Scipio, or a Cæsar, while I should be content to be, I don't say, a Virgil—there never will be but one Virgil—but a Horace, a Longinus, or even an Apuleius. You want a camp, an army, tents, horses, bright uniforms, drums, bugles, trumpets, military music, the cracking of rifles, the thunder of cannon; for me the *aurea mediocritas* of the poet is enough—a little house full of friends, a great library full of books, a life work and dreams, the death of the righteous in the end, and God will have given me more than I dare to ask. Ah! if I only knew Greek!"

"But what are you going to Pichegru for except to become his aide-de-camp some day."

"No, to be his secretary now; there, my bag is strapped."

"And my trunk is packed."

Eugene went into Charles's room.

"Ah!" said he, "you are fortunate to be able to limit your desires; you have at least some prospect of arriving at your goal, while I—"

"Do you think then that my ambition is not as great as yours, my dear Eugene, and that it is less difficult to become a Diderot than a Maréchal de Saxe, a Voltaire than a Turenne? To be sure, I do not aspire to be either a Diderot or a Voltaire."

"Nor I the Maréchal de Saxe."

"Never mind, we can wish for it, anyway."

At that moment Pierre Augereau's voice could be heard crying at the foot of the stairs: "Now then, young men, dinner is ready!"

"Come, Monsieur Scholar!" said Eugene.

"Come, Citizen General!" said Charles.

By a rare coincidence each one had wished for that which God had destined him to have.

One last word concerning the terrible events of that day; after which we will return to our young friends.

At six o'clock a post-chaise was brought to the guillotine to which Eugene Schneider was tied. It contained two gendarmes, who got out and unfastening Schneider made him enter the carriage and take a seat in it; then they themselves took their places beside him. The post-chaise set off at a gallop on the road to Paris.

On the 12th Germinal, of the year II. (1st of April, 1794), Euloge Schneider, of Vepefeld, was beheaded during the sessions of the revolutionary tribunal, for having by extortions and immoral and cruel vexations, by the most revolting and sanguinary abuse in the name of the revolutionary commission, oppressed, stolen, assassinated, and ravished the

honor, the fortune and the tranquillity of peaceable families.

A few days later the poet-shoemaker, Young, the musician, Edelmann, and the ex-prefect of the College of Besançon, Monnet, died upon the same scaffold.

Of the five heads of the individuals which were present at the famous dinner given by Euloge Schneider, when Mademoiselle de Brumpt came to beg for mercy in behalf of her father, that of Charles was the only one which had not been severed from its shoulders at the end of four months.



CHAPTER XV

THE COUNT DE SAINTE-HERMINE

The supper was excellent, the night calm, and, either because he did not wish to disturb his friends, or because he feared to miss the departure of the two boys, Augereau did not return to the barracks.

The next morning at six o'clock a conveyance stopped at the door of the Hôtel de la Lanterne.

Madame Teutch had declared that her little Charles was not strong enough to travel twenty-four miles in one day, and that the sergeant-major and she would drive him as far as Bischwiller, which was more than two-thirds of the way. At Bischwiller they would breakfast; and then, as the distance to Auenheim would only be about seven miles, Charles could do it on foot.

As we have already said, the general's headquarters were at Auenheim. On the way they would leave Eugene at the diligence, which at that period took four days and two nights to go from Strasbourg to Paris.

Madame Teutch and Augereau got in behind, Charles and Eugene in the front, and, with Sleepy-head on the driver's seat, they started. The carriage stopped at the diligence office, as had been arranged, where the diligence was all ready to start. Eugene got off the carriage; and as Charles, Madame Teutch, and the sergeant-major did not wish to leave him until the last moment, they also got out. Five minutes later the conductor gave the signal, and Eugene embraced each in turn. Madame Teutch thrust some cakes into his pocket, Charles pressed his hand tearfully, and Augereau explained to him for the hundredth time a secret thrust which he had learned from one of the best fencing-masters in Naples. At last they were obliged to part. Eugene disappeared into the immense vehicle; the door closed, the horses started, and they saw Eugene's profile pressed against the window, and heard his voice crying, "Farewell!" then the diligence rumbled into the street and vanished from sight. For some seconds they could hear the creaking of the wheels, the galloping of the horses, and the cracking of the postilion's whip, then the sounds gradually grew fainter, and finally ceased altogether.

Nothing is sadder than a departure; those who remain do not seem to have done so voluntarily, but to have been forgotten. Madame Teutch, Augereau, and Charles looked at each other sadly.

"He is gone," said Charles, wiping his eyes.

"And it will be your turn in two hours, my poor little Charles," said citizeness Teutch.

"Pooh!" said Augereau, who represented the courage of the company; "as the proverb says, mountains do not meet, but men sometimes do."

"Alas!" said Madame Teutch, "the proverb speaks of men, but it says nothing about women."

They re-entered the carriage. In spite of his heroic resistance, Madame Teutch took Charles upon her knee and kissed him for himself and Eugene. Augereau filled his pipe and lighted it. Then they awakened Coclès, who, in order not to lose completely his right to his old name, had fallen asleep.

The carriage started, but at the gate the itinerary was changed. When they inquired of the gate-keeper as to which was the shorter and better road to Auenheim, that of Bischwiller or that of Offendorf, he replied that they need not hesitate to choose the latter, which was a government road, while the other was only a provincial one. They therefore took the one to Offendorf.

This road is charming; it skirts the Rhine, and travellers have constantly before them the isles, which are so varied in form, and the broad majestic river, along which runs the road to Offendorf.

The travellers stopped a moment to breathe the horse, and to inquire for a place to breakfast; for the brisk morning air and the breeze that shook the white frost from its wings had sharpened their appetites.

They were directed to Rohwillers. One hour later they halted at the inn of the Golden Lion, and inquired the distance from Rohwillers to Auenheim. It was only nine short miles, which a good walker could cover in two hours and a half. Charles declared that they should not come any further and that he would be ashamed to tell Pichegru that he had only walked nine miles. How would he feel if they should go as far as Auenheim? He would die of shame. Perhaps, if she had been alone, Madame Teutch would have insisted, but the sergeant-major, who doubtless had good reasons for wishing to be alone with her, took sides with Charles.

It was half-past ten o'clock; they ordered breakfast, and arranged that they should separate at noon, the traveller to continue on his way to Auenheim, Pierre Augereau, citizeness Teutch, and "Sleepy-head" to return to Strasbourg.

The breakfast was sad at first; but the sergeant-major was in no wise inclined to melancholy, and, little by little, the Moselle and Rhine wine enlivened the guests. They drank to Augereau's promotion, to Madame Teutch's continued good health, since they could not wish it to be better; to Eugene's safe journey, to the successful termination of his father's trial, to Charles's future; and, as a result of these toasts, sadness yielded to an illimitable trust in Providence.

France believed neither in the ancient God who had been dethroned, nor in the new God who had just been proclaimed; the Eternal Father was too old, the Supreme Being was too young. Providence, of whom these destroyers of altars had not thought, made a fair compromise.

Noon struck. The sergeant-major rose first.

"Honest men," said he, "have but one word. We agreed to say good-by at noon, and it has just struck. Besides, if we were to stay together an hour longer, or even two, we would still have to part; therefore let us do so now. Come, Charles, my boy, show us that you are a man."

Charles, without replying, slung his little bag across his shoulders, took his walking-stick in one hand and his hat in the other, embraced first the fencing-master, then Madame Teutch, and tried to thank her, but his voice failed him.

He could only say "Au revoir!" slip a twenty-franc note into Coclès' hand, and rush out into the road.

After he had gone fifty paces, he stopped just where the road made a bend, and saw that citizeness Teutch and the sergeant-major had gone up to a room on the first floor which overlooked the road to Auenheim.

Mistrusting her weakness, the good landlady of the Hôtel de la Lanterne was leaning upon the sergeant-major's arm, and, with the hand that was free, was waving her handkerchief to Charles. Charles drew out his handkerchief and answered her signals.

Another turn in the road hid the window from him. He retraced his steps for a last wave of the hand to his two good friends. But the window was closed, and the curtain was drawn so carefully that it was impossible to see whether they had gone downstairs or not. Charles breathed a deep sigh, hastened his steps, and was soon beyond the village.

December was half gone. The winter had been severe. For three days, a most unusual occurrence in that village, the snow had fallen and had melted as fast as it fell. But in the open country, where it was seldom trampled, it had accumulated and was hardened by a temperature of ten degrees. The road was dazzling; it seemed as if the night had spread a carpet of white velvet, spangled with silver stars, beneath the feet of the traveller. The trees, adorned with icicles, looked like immense chandeliers. The birds fluttered along the road, anxiously seeking the accustomed food with which God provided them, but which, during the last three days, it had been so difficult to find. Shivering, and fluffing their feathers, they looked twice their natural size, and when they perched on the flexible branches, or left them to fly away, they scattered a shower of diamonds.

Charles, who in after-life was so impressionable to the beauties of Nature, and who described them so perfectly, lost his sad thoughts in the picturesque scene; and, proud of this his first liberty of mind and body, with which he was entering the world, walked on without noticing the road or feeling fatigue.

He had already accomplished three-quarters of the way, when, just beyond Sessersheim, he was overtaken by a little squad of foot-soldiers, about twenty in all, commanded by a mounted captain who was smoking a cigar. The twenty men were marching in two files. In the middle of the road, like Charles, a horseman—easily identified as such by his boots and spurs—was walking. A large white cloak covered his shoulders and fell to his feet, leaving only a youthful head visible, in which intelligence seemed to combine with carelessness and gayety. He wore a foraging cap of a style not in vogue in the French army.

The captain, seeing Charles on the road near the man with the white cloak, looked sharply at him for a moment, and then, seeing that he was only a boy, smiled pleasantly to him.

"Where are you going, my young citizen?" he asked.

"Captain," replied the boy, believing that he must give a lengthy explanation, "I have come from Strasbourg, and I am on my way to General Pichegru's headquarters at Auenheim. Is that very far off?"

"About two hundred paces," replied the man in the white cloak; "see, you may get a glimpse of the first houses of

Auenheim at the end of that avenue of trees which we are just about to enter."

"Thank you," said Charles, making ready to hurry on.

"Faith, young man," continued the man in the white cloak, "if you are not in too much of a hurry you might go along with us. Then I could ask you for some news from home."

"What home, citizen?" asked Charles in astonishment, looking for the first time at the fine noble countenance which was for a moment veiled in sadness.

"Come," said the latter, "you are from Besançon, or at least from the Franche-Comté. Can our national accent be disguised? I, too, come from the Franche-Comté, and I am proud of it."

Charles pondered a moment; this recognition of the accent awakened a college memory in his mind.

"Well," asked the young man, "do you wish to be unknown?"

"No, citizen; I was only thinking that Theophrastus, who was first called Tyrtamus, and whom the Athenians, as his name indicates, had surnamed the 'fine speaker,' was recognized as a Lesbian by his accent, after fifty years sojourn at Athens, by a dealer in herbs."

"You are learned, sir," replied the young man, smiling. "That is a luxury in these days."

"No, for I am on my way to General Pichegru, who is very learned himself. I hope to become his secretary, thanks to my letter of recommendation. And you, citizen, do you belong to the army?"

"Not exactly."

"Then," said Charles, "you are attached to the administration?"

"Attached—that's the word. Only I am not attached to the administration; I am attached to myself."

"But," said Charles, lowering his voice, "you called me monsieur out loud. Are you not afraid that you will lose your place?"

"Oh! I say, captain," laughed the young man, "here is a young citizen who is afraid that I shall lose my place for calling him monsieur! Do you know any one who wants my place? I will do him the honor of giving it to him instantly."

The captain replied only by a sad smile and a shrug; but Charles thought he heard him murmur, "Poor devil!"

"Tell me," continued the young man in the white cloak, "since you are from Besançon—for you do come from there, do you not?"

"I do not deny it," replied Charles.

"You must know a family there named Sainte-Hermine."

"Yes, a widowed mother whose husband was guillotined eight months ago."

"That is the one," said the young man, lifting his eyes to heaven.

"And three sons."

"Three sons! yes, there are still three," murmured the other with a sigh.

"The eldest, the Comte de Sainte-Hermine, who emigrated, and two others younger than he; one is about twenty and the other is not more than fourteen or fifteen."

"Thank you; how long is it since you left Besançon?"

"About eight days."

"Then you can give me some recent news about this family?"

"Yes, but it is sad news."

"Tell it nevertheless."

"The night before I left, my father and I attended the funeral of the countess."

"Ah!" exclaimed the young man, as if he had received an unexpected blow; "then the countess is dead?"

"Yes."

"So much the better," said he with a sigh, as he raised his eyes wet with tears to heaven.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Charles.

"Yes," replied the young man, "it is better that she should die of sickness than through grief when she learns that her son has been shot."

"What? has the Comte de Sainte-Hermine been shot?"

"No, but he is going to be."

"When?"

"Why, as soon as we reach the fortress of Auenheim; that is where the executions usually take place."

"Then the count is at the fortress?"

"No, they are taking him there."

"And they will shoot him?"

"As soon as I get there."

"Then you have charge of the execution?"

"No, but I hope they will let me give the order to fire. That is a favor that is seldom refused to any brave soldier taken with his arms in his hand, even if he has emigrated."

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Charles, catching a glimpse of the truth. "Are—"

"Exactly, my young friend. That is why I laughed when you recommended prudence, and why I offered to give my place to any one who wanted it, for I have no fear of losing it. As you said, I am attached."

And shaking aside his cloak with a movement of his shoulders, he showed the boy that his hands were fastened in front and his arms bound behind.

"Then," cried Charles, with a movement of terror, "you are—"

"The Comte de Sainte-Hermine, my child. You see I was right when I said that it is well my poor mother is dead."

"Oh!" exclaimed Charles.

"Luckily," he continued between his teeth, "my brothers still live!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE FORAGING CAP

Charles looked at the young nobleman with an astonishment that amounted almost to stupefaction. What! Was this young officer, so handsome, so calm, so youthful, about to die? Then there were men who met death smilingly!

He had never seen but one man who thought he was about to die, and that was Schneider when Saint-Just had ordered him to be fastened under the guillotine. Schneider had been hideous with terror, his legs bent under him, and they had been obliged to carry him up the scaffold steps.

The Comte de Sainte-Hermine, on the contrary, when he was about to die, had gathered all his forces together for the supreme moment. He walked with a light step and a smile on his lips.

Charles drew near him. "Is there no way of saving you?" he asked in a low tone.

"Frankly, I know of none; if I did I should try it."

"But—excuse me; I was far from expecting—"

"To travel in such bad company?"

"I want to ask you—" and the boy hesitated.

"What?"

"If I can serve you in any way?" continued Charles, lowering his voice still more.

"You can certainly be of some use to me; since I have seen you I have been revolving a scheme."

"Tell me what it is."

"It may be a little dangerous, and it might frighten you."

"I will risk anything to do you a service. I was in Strasbourg for three or four days, and during that time I saw so many things that nothing can frighten me now."

"I should like to send a message to my brother."

"I will deliver it."

"But it is a letter."

"I will deliver it."

"Are you not afraid of the risk you run?"

"I have already told you that nothing can frighten me now."

"I suppose I might give it to the captain; he would probably forward it to its destination."

"With the captain it is only probable, while with me it is certain."

"Then listen to me."

"I am listening."

"The letter is sewn inside my foraging cap."

"Good."

"You must ask the captain to let you be present at my execution."

"I?"

"Don't be afraid; it is a curious spectacle. Many people go to see executions just for the fun of it."

"I should never have the courage."

"Pooh! It is soon over."

"Oh! never, never!"

"We will say no more about it," said the prisoner; and he began to whistle, "Vive Henri IV."

Charles's heart seemed to turn within him, but his resolution was taken. He approached the prisoner again. "Excuse me," he said, "I will do whatever you ask."

"What a good boy you are! Thanks."

"Only—"

"Well?"

"You must ask the colonel to let me be present. I should never forgive myself if any one thought that I wanted to—"

"Very good; I will ask him. As a fellow-countryman that will be quite natural. Besides, the soldiers do not put on so many airs as the civilians; they have a stern duty to fulfil, and they make it as easy as possible. Where were we?"

"You were saying that I must be present at your execution."

"Yes, that was it. I shall ask to be allowed to send something to my brother that belongs to me—my foraging cap, for example; that is done every day. Besides, you see, a foraging cap would never be suspected."

"No."

"Just as they are about to fire I will toss it aside. Do not be in too much of a hurry to pick it up—they might suspect something. But when I am dead—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Charles, with a shiver.

"Who has a drop of brandy to give my little compatriot? He is cold."

"Come here, my pretty boy," said the captain, offering the boy a flask. Charles took a swallow of brandy; not that he was cold, but because he did not wish to betray his feelings.

"Thanks, captain," he said.

"At your service, boy; at your service. A mouthful, citizen Sainte-Hermine?"

"A thousand thanks, captain; I never drink it."

Charles returned to the prisoner's side.

"Only," continued the latter, "when I am dead, pick it up without seeming to attach more importance to it than it deserves. But you will remember, will you not, that my last wish—and the last wishes of a dying man are sacred—that my last wish is that the letter in it be given to my brother. If the cap bothers you, take out the letter and throw the cap into the first ditch you come to; but the letter—you will not lose the letter?"

"No."

"You will not mislay it?"

"No, no; do not worry."

"And you will give it to my brother yourself?"

"Yes, myself."

"Try to. Then you must tell him how I died, and he will say: 'I had a brave brother; when my turn comes I will die like him'; and, if his turn comes, he will die like me."

They had reached a point where two roads branched off; the main road led to the city of Auenheim itself, and the crossroad to the citadel.

"Citizen," said the captain, "if you are going, as you said, to General Pichegru's headquarters, that is your road. A good journey to you, and try to become a good soldier; you will be in a fine school."

Charles tried to speak, but his lips refused to form the words. He looked entreatingly at the prisoner.

"Captain," said the latter, "will you grant me a favor?"

"If it is in my power to do so."

"It only depends upon you."

"What is it?"

"Well, it may be a weakness, but it will remain between ourselves, will it not? When I die I should like to embrace a compatriot. We are both children of the Jura, this young boy and I; our families live in Besançon, and are on a friendly footing. Some day he will go home, and tell how he met me by chance, how he followed me up to the last moment, and saw me die."

The captain looked inquiringly at the boy. He was weeping.

"Why," he said, "if it can give you both any pleasure—"

"I do not suppose that it will give him much pleasure, but it will please me."

"I see no objection, and, since you, the person most interested, ask it—"

"It is granted," said the prisoner.

"Granted," replied the captain.

The troop, which had halted for a moment at the crossroads, now resumed its march. At the top of the little hill they saw the citadel of Auenheim. It was the goal of their sad journey. Charles drew closer to the prisoner.

"You see," said the latter, "so far all goes beautifully."

They went up the slope, which was very steep, although it wound around the hill. At the gate they made themselves known, and were then swallowed up in the depths of the fortress. The escort, the prisoner and Charles were left in the court while the captain in charge of the squad went to make his report to the commanding officer. In the meantime, Charles and the count improved their acquaintance, Charles in his turn giving information about his family. The captain reappeared on the doorstep in about ten minutes.

"Are you ready, citizen?" he asked the prisoner.

"Whenever you are," replied the latter.

"Have you anything to say?"

"No; but I have a few favors to ask."

"As I told you, anything in my power I will grant."

"Thank you, captain."

The captain came closer to the count. "We may serve under different flags," said he, "but we are still Frenchmen, and brave men recognize each other at a glance. Speak then; what do you want?"

"First, I want you to take off these cords which make me look like a galley-slave."

"You are right," said the captain. "Unbind the prisoner."

Two men stepped forward; but Charles had already darted toward the count and freed his hands.

"Ah!" exclaimed the count, stretching out his arms, and shaking himself beneath his mantle, "how good it feels to be free."

"And now?" asked the captain.

"I want to give the word of command."

"You shall give it. And then?"

"I should like to send some souvenir to my family."

"You know that we are forbidden to take any letters from political prisoners who are condemned to death; but anything else, yes."

"I do not wish to give you any trouble on that score. Here is my compatriot Charles, who, as you have already promised,

is to accompany me to the place of execution; he will undertake to deliver something to my family; let it be, not a letter, but an article that has belonged to me—my old foraging cap, for instance."

The count named his cap in the same careless tone he would have employed in speaking of any other article of his apparel, and the captain did not hesitate to grant his request.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"Faith, yes," answered the count, "and it is time. My feet are growing cold, and there is nothing in the world I dislike so much as cold feet. Come, captain; for you are coming with us, I presume."

"It is my duty."

The count bowed, smilingly pressed little Charles's hand, and looked inquiringly at the captain to know what direction to take.

"This way," said the captain, placing himself at the head of the squad.

They followed him, passing through a postern gate into a second court, upon the ramparts of which sentinels were pacing back and forth. At the end was a tall wall riddled with balls at about the height of a man's head.

"Ah! there it is," said the prisoner; and he went toward the wall of his own accord. Four steps from it he stopped.

"Here we are," said the captain. "Clerk, read the sentence to the condemned man."

After the reading the count bowed his head, as if to acknowledge its justice. Then he said: "I beg your pardon, captain; I have a few words to say by myself."

The captain and the soldiers drew aside. The count put the elbow of his right arm in his left hand, leaned his forehead upon his right hand, shut his eyes, and remained motionless, his lips moving silently. He was praying.

There is something holy about a man who is about to die, and who is praying, which even the most unbelieving respect. Not a word, not a smile, not a jest, disturbed the count's last communion with God. When he raised his head his face wore a smile; he embraced his young compatriot, and, like Charles I., his last injunction was: "Remember!"

Charles bowed his head, weeping.

Then the count said in a firm voice: "Attention!"

The soldiers fell into two ranks at ten paces from him, the captain and Charles placing themselves at either side. The condemned man, as if he did not wish to give the order to fire while his head was still covered, took off his foraging cap and tossed it carelessly aside. It fell at Charles's feet.

"Are you ready?" asked the count.

"Yes," replied the soldiers.

"Present arms! Ready! Fire!—Long live the k—"

He had not time to finish; a report was heard; seven bullets had pierced his breast; he fell face down upon the ground. Charles picked up the foraging cap, put it inside his vest, and buttoned the latter over it; and, as he put it in his vest, he made sure that the letter was there.

A quarter of an hour later he entered citizen-general Pichegru's cabinet.

CHAPTER XVII

PICHEGRU

Pichegru is destined to play so important a part in this story that we must fix the eyes of the reader upon him with more attention than we have done with the secondary characters that we have hitherto put upon the scene.

Charles Pichegru was born on the 16th of February, 1761, in the village of Planches, near Arbois. His family were poor and rustic; his forefathers had been known for three or four hundred years as honest day-laborers, and they had derived their name from the character of their work. They reaped their *gru* or grain, with the *pic* or mattock; from these two words, *pic* and *gru*, the name of Pichegru had been derived.

Pichegru, who early showed traces of that precocious disposition which marks the distinguished man, began his education at the school of the Paulist Fathers at Arbois; they, seeing his rapid progress, particularly in mathematics, sent him, with Father Patrault, one of their professors, to the College of Brienne. There he made such progress that at the end of two years he was appointed assistant professor. At this period his whole ambition was to be a monk; but Father Patrault, who divined Napoleon's genius, saw, with equal clearness, Pichegru's possibilities, and induced him to turn his attention to military life.

Yielding to his advice, Pichegru, in 1783, entered the first foot artillery, where, thanks to his incontestable merit, he promptly rose to the rank of adjutant, in which grade he made his first campaign in America. Upon his return to France he ardently embraced the principles of 1789, and was a leader in a popular society in Besançon, when a regiment of the Volunteer Guards, passing through the city, chose him for their commander. Two months later Pichegru was commander-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine.

M. de Narbonne, Minister of War, having missed him, asked one day in speaking of him: "What became of that young officer to whom all the colonels were tempted to take off their hats when they spoke to him?"

This young officer had become commander-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine, a promotion that had not tended to make him any prouder than he had been before. And, indeed, Pichegru's rapid advancement, his fine education, and the exalted position he held in the army had not changed in the least the simplicity of his heart. As a sub-officer, he had had a mistress, and had always provided for her; her name was Rose, she was thirty years old, a dressmaker, lame, and not at all pretty. She lived at Besançon. Once a week she wrote to the general, always in the most respectful manner.

These letters were always full of good counsel and tender advice; she admonished the general not to be dazzled by his good fortune, and to remain the same Charlot that he had always been at home; she urged him to economy, not for her sake, but for that of his parents. She, God be thanked, could take care of herself; she had made six dresses for the wife of a representative, and was to make six more for the wife of a general. She had in addition three pieces of gold, which represented fifteen or sixteen hundred francs in paper money.

Pichegru, whatever his occupation, always read these letters as soon as he received them, and put them away in his portfolio carefully, saying: "Poor dear girl, I myself taught her how to spell."

We crave permission to enlarge upon these details. We are about to bring actively upon the stage men who, for a long time, have been more or less prominently before the eyes of Europe, who have been praised or blamed as the different parties wished to elevate or abase them. Historians themselves have judged these men more or less superficially, thanks to their habit of accepting ready-made opinions; but it is different with the novelist, constrained as he is to descend to the veriest details, since in the most insignificant he may sometimes find the thread that will guide him through the most inextricable labyrinth—that of the human heart. We therefore dare to affirm that in showing them in their private life, which historians altogether neglect to do, as well as in their public life, to which too much attention is often paid, although it is sometimes but the mask of the other, we shall bring these illustrious dead before the reader's eyes, for the first time as they really were—these dead whom political passions have cast into the hands of calumny to be buried and forgotten.

Thus history tells us that Pichegru betrayed France, for the sake of the government of Alsace, the red ribbon, the Château of Chambord, its park, and its dependencies, together with twelve pieces of cannon, a million, in ready money, two thousand francs of income, half of which was revertible at his death to his wife, and five thousand to each of his children; and finally the territory of Arbois, which was to bear the title of Pichegru, and was to be exempt from taxes for ten years.

The material reply to this accusation is that, as Pichegru was never married, he had neither wife nor children to provide for; the moral reply is, to show him in his private life that we may know what his needs and ambitions really were.

Rose, as we have seen, gave two pieces of advice to her lover: One was to practice economy for his parents' sake, and the other was to remain the same good and simple Charlot that he had always been.

Pichegru received during the campaign a daily sum of one hundred and fifty thousand francs in paper money. The sum for the whole month arrived on the 1st in great sheets divided off. Every morning enough was cut off for the needs of the day, and the sheet was laid upon a table with a pair of scissors upon it. Any one who wished had access to it, and the result was that the sheet rarely lasted the whole month. When it was gone, on the 24th or 25th, as frequently happened, every one had to get along as best he could for the remainder of the time.

One of his secretaries wrote of him: "The great mathematician of Brienne was incapable of calculating in ready money the account of his washerwoman." And he added: "An empire would have been too small for his genius; a farm was too great for his indolence."

As for Rose's advice to remain "the same good Charlot," we shall see whether he needed the advice.

Two or three years after the time of which we are writing, Pichegru, then at the height of his popularity, on his return to his beloved Franche-Comté, to revisit his natal town of Planche, was stopped at the entrance of Arbois, beneath a triumphal arch, by a deputation which came to compliment him and to invite him to a state dinner and a grand ball.

Pichegru listened smilingly to the orator, and when he had finished, said:

"My dear compatriot, I have only a few hours to pass in the place where I was born, and I must devote most of them to my relatives in the neighboring villages; if the friendship which exists between us should lead me to neglect them, you would be the first to blame me, and you would be right. You have come to invite me to a dinner and a ball, and, although I have not been in the habit of indulging in those pleasures lately, I should be delighted to participate in them. I should be pleased to drink a few glasses of our excellent new wine in such good company, and to watch the young girls of Arbois dancing; they must be very pretty, if they resemble their mothers. But a soldier has only his word, and I swear to you, on my honor, that I am engaged. Long ago I promised Barbier, the vine-dresser, to take my first meal with him when next I should come here, and I cannot in conscience eat two dinners between now and sunset."

"But," said the president, "it seems to me that there is a way of compromising the difficulty."

"What is it?"

"To invite Barbier to dine with us."

"If you do that, and he accepts, I shall ask nothing better," said Pichegru. "But I doubt if he will. Does he still have that same fierce and melancholy air which won him the name of Barbier the Desperate?"

"More than ever, general."

"Well, I will go and find him myself," said Pichegru, "for I think nothing short of my influence will induce him to dine with us."

"Very well, general, we will accompany you," said the deputies.

"Come along," said Pichegru.

And they went in search of Barbier the Desperate, a poor vine-dresser, who owned only a hundred vines, and who watered with their produce his poor crust of black bread.

They walked through the town. At the other end the general stopped before an old linden tree.

"Citizens," he said, "preserve this tree and never allow any one to cut it down. It was here that a hero, who had defended your town with five hundred men against the whole royal army commanded by Biron, suffered martyrdom. The hero's name was Claude Morel. That brute of a beast, named Biron, who ended by biting the hand that fed him, had Morel hanged to that tree. A few years later, it was Biron himself, who, having betrayed France, fought for his life with the executioner, until the man was forced to cut off his head by a miracle of strength and skill, taking his sword from the attendant's hand when the prisoner was not looking."

And saluting the glorious tree, Pichegru continued on his way amid the plaudits of the people who accompanied him.

Some one who knew where Barbier's vineyard was, discovered him in the midst of the poles and called him. Barbier lifted his head, covered with the traditional red cap, and asked: "Who wants me?"

"Charlot," replied the other.

"What Charlot?"

"Charlot Pichegru."

"You are making fun of me," said the vine-dresser, and he returned to his work.

"Indeed, I am not, for here he is himself."

"Hey! Barbier," cried Pichegru.

At the well-known voice, Barbier the Desperate stood up, and seeing the general's uniform in the midst of the group, he exclaimed: "Hallo! is it really he?"

Running through the poles, he stopped at the edge of the vineyard to assure himself that he was not the victim of a hallucination. Having satisfied himself that it really was the general, he ran to him, and, throwing himself into his arms, cried: "Is it indeed you, my dear Charlot, my Charlot?"

"And is it you, my dear friend?" replied Pichegru, pressing him to his heart.

And the peasant and his friend wept together, while every one drew aside that their meeting might be uninterrupted.

After the first greetings had been exchanged, the president approached them, and explained to Barbier the Desperate the object of this ceremonious visit in the midst of the fields. Barbier looked at Pichegru to know whether he should accept or not. The latter nodded affirmatively.

Barbier wished at least to go home and put on his Sunday clothes, but the president, who had read in Berchou's poems what that famous lover of good cheer has to say about warmed-up dinners, would not allow him to take the time, and they escorted Pichegru and Barbier the Desperate to the mayor's house, where dinner was awaiting them.

Pichegru placed the president at his right, but Barbier the Desperate sat at his left, and Pichegru talked to him constantly, never leaving him until he took his departure.

We crave pardon for this long digression which gives a glimpse of one of the most remarkable men of the Revolution. This glance, thrown upon his private life, will aid us to judge and understand, perhaps more impartially than has been done in the past, the man who is to be one of the most important characters in this story.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHARLES'S RECEPTION

It was to this man, destined, unless the fates interfered, to a remarkable future, that Charles carried a letter of introduction. It was therefore with almost greater emotion than he had felt in approaching Schneider and Saint-Just that the boy entered the large but unpretentious house where Pichegru had made his headquarters.

The sentinel, standing at the entrance to the corridor, told him that Pichegru was in his cabinet, the third door to the right.

Charles entered the corridor with a firm step that gradually grew slower and less noisy as he approached the door that had been pointed out to him.

When he reached the threshold of the half-open door, he could see the general, leaning with both hands on a table, studying a large map of Germany; so sure was he that he should forthwith carry hostilities beyond the Rhine.

Pichegru appeared older than he really was, and his figure aided in the deception; he was above medium height, and he was solidly and sturdily built. He possessed no other elegance than that of strength. His chest was broad, although he stooped slightly. His vast shoulders, from which rose a short, full, vigorous neck, gave him something of the appearance of an athlete, like Milo, or a gladiator, like Spartacus. His face had the square contour peculiar to the Franks-Comtois of pure descent. His jawbones were enormous, and his forehead immense and very prominent about the temples. His nose was well-formed, and very straight, forming a long ridge from tip to base. Nothing could have been more gentle than his expression, unless he had reason to make it imperious or formidable. Had a great artist wished to express the impassibility of a demigod on a human face, he might have taken Pichegru's for a model.

His profound contempt for men and events, concerning which he never expressed his opinion save with disdainful irony, added greatly to his character. Pichegru loyally served the social order which he had found established, because it was his duty; but he did not and he could not like it. His heart softened only when he thought of the village where he hoped to pass his old age. "To fulfil one's task and then to rest," he often said, "is the whole destiny of man!"^[2]

We borrow this portrait from Nodier's study of Pichegru.

Charles made a slight movement which betrayed his presence to Pichegru. The latter possessed the quick sight and keen hearing of the man whose life often depends upon that hearing or sight. He raised his head swiftly and fastened his eyes upon the child with an expression of kindness that emboldened him greatly.

He entered and handed his letter to the general with a bow. "For the citizen-general Pichegru," he said.

"Did you recognize me?" asked the general.

"Immediately, general."

"But you had never seen me."

"My father has described you to me."

During this conversation Pichegru had opened the letter.

"What!" he said, "so you are the son of my brave and dear friend—"

The boy did not allow him to finish.

"Yes, citizen-general," he said.

"He says that he gives you to me."

"It remains to be seen whether you will accept the gift."

"What do you want me to do with you?"

"Anything you please."

"I cannot in conscience make a soldier of you; you are too young and weak."

"General, I did not expect to have the pleasure of seeing you so soon. My father gave me another letter to a friend in Strasbourg, where I was to have stayed at least a year to study Greek under him."

"It was not Euloge Schneider?" asked Pichegru, with a laugh.

"Yes, it was."

"Well?"

"Well, he was arrested yesterday."

"By whose order?"

"By that of Saint-Just; he has been sent to the revolutionary tribunal at Paris."

"In that case, you may as well say farewell to him. How did it happen?"

Charles related Mademoiselle de Brumpt's story, to which Pichegru listened with evident interest.

"In truth," he said, "some creatures dishonor humanity. Saint-Just did well. And you did not get spattered with the mud in the midst of all that?"

"Oh!" said Charles, proud of being the hero of an adventure at his age, "I was in prison when it happened."

"What, in prison?"

"Yes; I was arrested the day before."

"Then they have begun to arrest children?"

"That is just what made Saint-Just so angry."

"But why were you arrested?"

"For warning two deputies from Besançon that it was not safe for them to remain in Strasbourg."

"Dumont and Ballu?"

"Yes."

"They are on my staff; you will see them."

"I thought they had returned to Besançon?"

"They changed their minds on the way. And so it is to you they owe the warning that probably saved their lives?"

"It seems I did wrong," said the boy, lowering his eyes.

"Wrong! Who told you that you had done wrong in accomplishing a good deed and saving the lives of your fellow-creatures?"

"Saint-Just; but he added that he pardoned me, since pity was a childish virtue. Then he quoted his own example to me; that very morning he had sent his best friend to be shot."

Pichegru's face darkened.

"That is true," he said; "the occurrence was put upon the order of the day, and I must acknowledge that, however one may judge of it individually, it had a good influence upon the discipline of the soldiers. But God preserve me from having to give such an example, for I do not hesitate to say that I should not do it. The devil! we are Frenchmen, and not Spartans. They can put a mask over our faces for a time, but sooner or later that mask will lift and the face beneath will be the same; it may have a few more wrinkles, but that is all."

"Well, general, to return to my father's letter—"

"It is settled that you stay with us. I attach you as secretary to my staff. Can you ride?"

"I must confess, general, that I am not a very good horseman."

"You will learn. You came on foot?"

"From Rohwillers, yes."

"And how did you get from Strasbourg to Rohwillers?"

"I came in a carry-all with Madame Teutch."

"The landlady of the Hôtel de la Lanterne?"

"And sergeant-major Augereau."

"And how the devil did you get acquainted with that brute, Pierre Augereau?"

"He was Eugene Beauharnais' fencing-master."

"Son of General Beauharnais?"

"Yes."

"Another one who will expiate his victories upon the scaffold," said Pichegru, with a sigh; "they find that grape-shot does not work fast enough. But then, my poor child, you must be half starved."

"Oh, no," replied Charles; "I have just seen a sight that has taken away my appetite."

"What have you seen?"

"I saw a poor noble shot, who comes from our country. He emigrated, and I think you must know him."

"The Comte de Sainte-Hermine?"

"Yes."

"They guillotined the father eight months ago, and to-day they have shot the son. There are still two brothers." Pichegru shrugged his shoulders, and continued, "Why not shoot them all at once? Then they would be rid of the whole family. Have you ever seen any one guillotined?"

"No."

"Well, to-morrow, if it will amuse you, you can have the pleasure; there are twenty-two to be disposed of. There will be all kinds, from officers to grooms. And now let us arrange about your quarters. It will not take long." He showed the boy a mattress upon the floor. "That is my bed," said he. Then, pointing to another, "That one belongs to citizen Reignac, chief secretary of the staff." Here he rang, and a soldier appeared. "A mattress," ordered the general.

Five minutes later the soldier returned with a mattress. Pichegru pointed out the spot where he wished it to be placed.

"And there is yours," he said. Then, opening a closet, he continued, "This closet you will have for yourself. No one will put anything in it that does not belong to you, and you must not put anything in any closet that is not yours. As your bundle is not large, I think it will answer. If you have anything that you value particularly, carry it about with you; that is the safest way. Not that you risk having it stolen, but you risk leaving it behind you when the order comes for a hurried departure, whether it be to advance or to retreat."

"General," said the boy, ingenuously, "I had nothing precious except my father's letter to you, and you have that now."

"Then kiss me and unpack your belongings; I must get back to my map."

As he turned toward the table, he caught sight of two men talking in the corridor opposite his door.

"Ah!" he said. "Come in, citizen Ballu; come in, citizen Dumont! I want you to meet a guest who has just arrived." And he pointed to Charles. Then, as they both looked at him without recognizing him, Pichegru continued: "My dear compatriots, thank this child; he sent you the warning which has kept your heads on your shoulders until to-day."

"Charles!" they both cried at once, embracing him and pressing him to their hearts. "Our wives and our children shall know your name to love and bless it."

While Charles was replying as best he could to this effusion, a young man entered, and, in excellent Latin, asked Pichegru whether he could grant him an interview of a quarter of an hour.

Pichegru, much astonished by this greeting, replied in the same language that he was at his disposal.

Opening the door of a smaller room, he signed to the stranger to enter it, and followed him: then, thinking that the man had something confidential to confide to him, he closed the door behind him.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SPY

Pichegru threw a rapid and questioning glance at the new-comer; but sharp and piercing as it was, it failed to tell him to what nationality he belonged. His appearance was that of a man who has come a long distance, and has walked much of the way. He wore a fox-skin cap and a blouse made of goat-skin, secured at the waist by a leather belt; the sleeves of a striped woollen vest showed through the openings at the upper part of this blouse, of which the hairy side was turned in; and his long boots, of which the soles were in a bad state, came up to his knees.

There was no hint of his nationality in all this. But his fair hair, his clear blue eye, firm even to fierceness, his flaxen mustache, his determined chin and broad jaws, convinced Pichegru that he belonged to one of the northern races.

The young man suffered this examination in a silence which seemed to defy Pichegru's scrutiny.

"Hungarian or Russian?" asked Pichegru in French.

"Polish," replied the young man, laconically, in the same language.

"An exile then?" asked Pichegru.

"Worse than that!"

"Poor people! So brave and so unfortunate!" and he held out his hand to the young man.

"Wait," said the latter; "before doing me this honor, you must know—"

"Every Pole is brave," said Pichegru. "Every exile has the right to the hand-clasp of a patriot."

But the Pole seemed to take a certain pride in refusing to accept this courtesy until he had proved that he had a right to it. He pulled out a little leathern bag which he wore upon his breast, as the Neapolitans wear their amulets, and took a folded paper from it.

"Do you know Kosciusko?" asked the young man, his eyes flashing as he spoke.

"Who does not know the hero of Dubienka?" exclaimed Pichegru.

"Then read that," said the Pole, handing him the note.

Pichegru took it and read as follows:

I recommend to all men who struggle for independence and the liberty of their country, this brave man, son of a brave man, brother of a brave man.

He was with me at Dubienka.

T. KOSCIUSKO.

"You have a fine brevet of bravery there, sir," said Pichegru; "will you do me the honor to become my aide-de-camp?"

"I should not do you much service, and I should not be avenging myself; it is vengeance that I seek."

"And against whom—Russians, Austrians or Prussians?"

"Against all three, since they are all oppressing and devouring unhappy Poland; but I hate the Prussians most."

"Where do you come from?"

"Dantzic. I belong to the old Polish race which, after having lost Poland in 1308, reconquered it in 1454, and defended it against Etienne Battori in 1575. From that day Dantzic has always held a Polish party ready to revolt, and which did revolt at Kosciusko's first call. My brother, my father and I seized our guns and placed ourselves under his orders.

"Thus we, my father, my brother and myself, found ourselves among four thousand men who defended the fort of Dubienka for five days against sixteen thousand Russians, when we had had only one day to fortify it.

"Some time later Stanislas yielded to Catherine's will. Kosciusko, unwilling to become the accomplice of the Czarina's lover, sent in his resignation, and my father, my brother and I returned to Dantzic, where I resumed my studies.

"One morning we learned that Dantzic had been ceded to the Prussians. There were among us at least two thousand patriots who protested with one hand and took up arms with the other; this tearing asunder of our native land, this dismemberment of our dear Poland, seemed to us a direct appeal, after moral protestation, to material protestation—the protestation of blood with which it is necessary to water the nations in order that they may not die. We went to meet the body of Prussians who had come to take possession of the city; they were ten thousand in number, and we were eighteen hundred.

"A thousand of us remained upon the battlefield. In the three days that followed three hundred died of their wounds. Five hundred remained.

"All were equally guilty, but our adversaries were generous. They divided us into three classes: the first were to be shot; the second were to be hanged; the third escaped with their lives after having received fifty lashes.

"They had divided us according to our strength. Those who were the most severely wounded were to be shot; those who were slightly wounded were to be hanged; those who were well and sound were to receive fifty lashes. Thus they would preserve the memory all their lives of the chastisement deserved by every ungrateful wretch who refuses to throw himself into the open arms of Prussia.

"My dying father was shot. My brother, who had a broken thigh, was hanged. I, who had only a scratch on my shoulder, received fifty lashes.

"At the fortieth I fainted; but the officers were conscientious men, and, although I did not feel the blows, they completed the number, and then left me lying upon the place of punishment without paying any further attention to me. My sentence read that when I had received the fifty lashes I was free. The punishment had taken place in one of the courts of the citadel. When I recovered consciousness it was night; I saw around me a number of inanimate bodies that resembled corpses, but who were men who, like myself, had probably fainted. I found my clothing, but, with the exception of my shirt, I was not able to put them on my bleeding shoulders. I threw them over my arm and endeavored to locate myself. A light was burning a short distance from me; I thought it belonged to the guard at the gate and I made my way to it. The sentinel was at his wicket.

"Your name?" he asked.

"I told him my name."

He consulted his list.

"Here," he said, "is your passport."

"I looked at it. It read, 'Good for the frontier.'"

"Then I cannot enter Dantzic?" I asked.

"Not under pain of death."

"I thought of my mother, bereaved of her husband and her sons; I uttered a sigh, committed her to God, and took up my march. I had no money, but fortunately in a secret fold of my pocketbook I had managed to save the note which Kosciusko had given me, and which I have shown you.

"I took my way through Custrin, Frankfort and Leipsic. As sailors are guided by the polar star so I looked to France, that beacon of liberty, and hastened toward it. Six weeks of hunger, fatigue, miseries, and humiliations were forgotten when I set foot in the holy land of liberty yesterday, all save the hope of vengeance. I threw myself upon my knees and blessed God that I was as strong as the crime of which I had been made the victim. In all your soldiers I saw brothers, not marching to the conquest of the world, but to the deliverance of the oppressed. A flag passed; I sprang toward it, asking permission of the officer to embrace this sacred emblem, the symbol of universal brotherhood. The officer hesitated.

"Ah!" I cried, "I am a Pole, and proscribed, and I have come nine hundred miles to join you. This flag is mine also. I have the right to kiss it, to press it to my heart, and to put my lips to it."

"And I took it almost by force, and kissed it, saying: 'Be always pure, brilliant, and glorious, flag of the conquerors of the Bastille, flag of Valmy, of Jemmapes, and of Berchem.'"

"Oh! general, for a moment I felt no more fatigue; I forgot my shoulders so cruelly lacerated beneath the lash, my brother suspended to the gibbet, my father shot. I forgot all, even vengeance.

"To-day I come to you. I am trained in all things pertaining to science; I speak five languages equally well; I can pass for German, Russian, English, or French. I can penetrate in any disguise into towns, fortresses and headquarters; I can give news of everything, for I can draw plans. No material obstacle can stop me; ten times, when I was a child, I swam across the Vistula. In short, I am no longer a man, I am a thing; I call myself no longer Stephan Moinjki, but Vengeance!"

"And do you wish to be a spy?"

"Do you call that man a spy who is fearless, and who by his intelligence can do the most harm to the enemy?"

"Yes."

"Then I wish to be a spy."

"Do you know that you risk being shot if you are caught?"

"Like my father."

"Or hanged?"

"Like my brother."

"The least that can happen to you is to be whipped. Do you know that?"

With a rapid movement Stephan loosened his coat, drew his arm out of the sleeve, turned down his shirt, and showed his back covered with blue welts.

"As I have been," he answered, laughing.

"Remember that I offer you a place in my army as a lieutenant, or as an interpreter."

"And you, citizen-general, must remember that I, finding myself unworthy, have refused. In condemning me they have put me outside the pale of manhood. Well, I will strike them secretly."

"Very well. And now, what do you want?"

"Some money to buy other clothes, and your orders."

Pichegru stretched out his hand and took a folio of assignats and a pair of scissors from a chair. It was what he received every month for his expenses at the seat of war. The month was not more than half gone, but the folio was nearly used up.

He cut three days' pay, amounting to four hundred and fifty francs, from it and gave them to the spy.

"Buy some clothes with that," he said.

"That is too much: I shall only want peasant's clothes," said the Pole.

"Perhaps to-morrow you will be obliged to buy another disguise."

"Very well. And now your orders?"

"Listen carefully to what I have to say," said Pichegru, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder.

The young man listened with his eyes fastened upon Pichegru; it seemed as if he were trying to see as well as to hear the words.

"I am advised," resumed Pichegru, "that the army of the Moselle, commanded by Hoche, is about to join mine. This union accomplished, we shall attack Woerth, Froeschwiller and Reichsoffen. Well, I must know the number of men and cannon that defend these places as well as the best points of attack. You will be aided by the hatred that our peasants and the Alsatian bourgeois bear the Prussians."

"Shall I bring you the information here? Will you wait for it, or will you start to meet the army of the Moselle?"

"In three or four days you will probably hear firing in the direction of Marschwilier, Dawendorff, or Uberack; you may join me wherever I am."

Just then the door opened and a young man, about twenty-five or six, wearing a colonel's uniform, entered.

From his light hair and mustache, and ruddy complexion, it was plain to be seen that he was one of the many Irishmen who had taken service in France now that she was likely to go to war with England.

"Ah! is it you, my dear Macdonald," said Pichegru, making a sign to the young man, "I was just going to send for you; here is one of your Scotch or English countrymen."

"Neither the English nor the Scotch are my countrymen, general," said Macdonald. "I am Irish."

"I beg your pardon, colonel," said Pichegru, laughing, "I did not mean to insult you, I only meant that he speaks nothing but English, and, as I do not know it very well, I want to know what he is saying."

"Nothing is easier," replied Macdonald. Then, addressing the young man, he put several questions to him, to which the other replied without an instant's hesitation.

"Has he told you what he wants?" asked Pichegru.

"Yes," replied Macdonald; "he asks for a place in the commissary department."

"Then," Pichegru said to the Pole, "that is all I wanted to know. Do what you have been told, and do not forget anything. If you will be good enough to translate what I have said to him, Macdonald, you will be doing me a great service."

Macdonald repeated, word for word, in English, what the general had said. The pretended Englishman bowed and went out.

"Well," asked Pichegru, "how does he speak English?"

"Admirably," replied Macdonald; "he has a slight accent which makes me think that he comes rather from the provinces than from London or Dublin. Only one would have to be English or Irish to detect it."

"That is all I wanted to know," said Pichegru, with a laugh. And he returned to the large room, followed by Macdonald.



CHAPTER XX

THE DYING MAN'S PROPHECY

Most of the officers attached to Pichegru's staff were away on some special service or reconnoissance when Charles reached headquarters.

On the following day, all the orders having been given for a speedy departure, and each one having returned, the breakfast-table was full. At the table, besides Colonel Macdonald, whom we have already seen, were seated four brigadier-generals, the citizens Lieber, Boursier, Michaud and Hermann; two staff-officers, the citizens Graume and Chaumette; and two aides-de-camp, the citizens Doumerc and Abatucci.

Doumerc was a captain of cavalry and about twenty-two years old; he was born in the neighborhood of Toulon, and, as far as physical excellence went, he was one of the finest men in the army. As for his courage, in those days bravery was not even considered a merit. He had one of those charming characters which enlivened the calm though somewhat cold serenity of Pichegru, who rarely took part in the conversation and who smiled as it were with his mind only.

Abatucci was a Corsican. At the age of fifteen he had been sent to the military school of Metz, and had become a lieutenant of artillery in 1789 and captain in 1792. It was while he held the latter rank that he was appointed aide-de-camp to Pichegru. He was a fine young man of twenty-two or three, and of acknowledged bravery. He was lithe and vigorous, with a bronzed complexion, which lent to his beauty, of the Greek type, an effect similar to that observed in the ancient medals; and this contrasted strangely with his spontaneous, almost childlike gayety.

Nothing could have been more enjoyable than were the meals of these young men, although the table resembled that of Lacedæmona. Woe to him who came late, whether detained by love or war; he found the dishes washed and the bottles empty, and had to eat his dry bread amid the laughter and jokes of his companions.

But not a week passed without leaving an empty place at the board. The general, as he entered, would notice it, and, by a gesture, order the cover of the absent one removed; he had died for his country. They drank to his memory, and all was over.

There was something of sovereign grandeur in this carelessness of life and forgetfulness of death.

The siege of Toulon had engaged the attention of the young men for the last few days almost as much as if they had been actors on the scene.

Toulon, it will be remembered, had been delivered to the English by Admiral Trogoff, whose name, we regret to say, we are not able to find in any encyclopedia; the names of traitors should be preserved.

M. Thiers, doubtless through patriotism, said that he was a Russian. Alas! he was a Breton.

The first news was not reassuring, and the young men, particularly those who were cavalry officers, had laughed heartily over General Cartaux's plan, which was embodied in the following lines:

The general body of artillery will bombard Toulon for three days; at the end of which time I shall attack it in three columns and take it.

Then the news came that General Dugommier had succeeded Cartaux. This inspired a little more confidence; but as he had returned from Martinique only two years before, and had been a general but eighteen months, he was an unknown quantity.

The last news received was that the siege had been begun according to all the rules of scientific warfare; that the artillery in particular was commanded by an officer of merit, and was doing efficient service. The natural result of all this was that the "Moniteur" was impatiently waited for each day.

It arrived just as they had finished breakfast. The general took it from the hands of the soldier who brought it in, and threw it across the table to Charles, saying: "Here, citizen secretary, this is a part of your duties; look and see if there is anything about Toulon."

Charles, blushing up to his eyes, opened the paper, and stopped at these words:

Letter from General Dugommier, dated at headquarters at Ollioules, 10th Frimaire, year II.

CITIZEN MINISTER—The day has been hot but fortunate. Two days ago an important battery opened fire on Malbosquet, and has done great damage to that post and its surroundings. This morning at five o'clock the enemy made a vigorous sortie, by which at first they carried all our advance posts to the left of this battery. At the first firing we were all swiftly transferred to the left wing.

I found almost all our forces in flight. General Garnier complained that his troops had abandoned him, and I ordered him to rally them and to report ready to retake our battery. I took command of the third battalion of the Iser, hoping to reach the same battery by another way. We were fortunate enough to succeed, and the position was soon recovered. The enemy, repulsed, retreated on every side, leaving a large number of wounded and dead. This sortie cost their army more than twelve hundred in killed, wounded, and prisoners; among the latter were several officers of superior rank, including their general-in-chief, O'Hara, who was wounded in the right arm.

Both generals were wounded in this action. I received two severe contusions—one in the right arm and another in the shoulder—neither of which is dangerous. After having repulsed the enemy, our Republicans, by a courageous but disorderly movement, marched toward Malbosquet, covered by the formidable fire of this fort. They captured the tents of a camp which had been abandoned in consequence of their intrepid movement. This action, which is a great triumph for the arms of the Republic, is an excellent augury for future operations; for what can we not attain by a concerted and organized attack, when we have done so well with an improvised one?

I cannot sufficiently extol the conduct of all those who fought. Among those who particularly distinguished themselves, and who were of the most assistance to me in rallying the forces for the advance, were citizens Buona Parte, commanding the artillery, and Aréna and Cervoni, adjutant-generals.

DUGOMMIER, *General-in-Chief.*

"Buona Parte," said Pichegru; "that must be the young Corsican to whom I was tutor, who showed such a marked talent for mathematics."

"There is a family named Buonaparte in Ajaccio," said Abatucci, "whose head, Charles de Buonaparte, was aide in Paoli's camp; they are cousins, these Buonapartes."

"The deuce," said Doumerc, "you are all cousins in Corsica."

"If it is the Buonaparte I mean," said Pichegru, "he is a young man five feet one or two inches tall, with straight hair plastered down at the temples, who did not know a word of French when he came to Brienne; he was of a misanthropic solitary turn of mind, strongly opposed to the union of Corsica with France, and a great admirer of Paoli. In two or three years he learned all that Father Patrault—by the way, Charles, he was the protector of your friend Euloge Schneider—could teach."

"Only," continued Abatucci, "they do not write the name as the 'Moniteur' has it, cut in two in the middle—it is simply Buonaparte."

A loud noise was heard at this point of the conversation, and every one hastened to the window overlooking the Rue de Strasbourg.

They were so near the enemy that they expected a surprise at every moment. They all seized their swords. Doumerc, who was nearer the window than the others, not only picked up his sword, but sprang out of the window, and rushed up the street to a turning where he could see the whole length of the road. But when he reached it, he shrugged his shoulders in token of disappointment, and returned to his companions with slow steps, and bent head.

"What is it?" asked Pichegru.

"Nothing, general, except the unfortunate Eisemberg and his staff on their way to the guillotine."

"But," said Pichegru, "are they not going straight to the citadel? We have always been spared this sight hitherto."

"That is true, general, but they have resolved to strike a blow this time that will send terror to the hearts of the soldiers. The execution of a general and his staff is such a good example for all the other generals and their staffs, that it has been judged advisable to have us all present at the spectacle."

"But," hazarded Charles timidly, "those were not sounds of sorrow but bursts of laughter that I heard."

A soldier coming from the same direction as the procession chanced to pass at this moment; the general recognized in him a man from the village of Arbois. He was a chasseur in the eighth regiment named Falou. The general called him by name.

The chasseur stopped short, looked to see who had called him, turned on his heel, and saluted.

"Come here," said the general.

The chasseur approached him.

"What is the cause of this laughter?" asked Pichegru. "The people are not insulting the condemned men, are they?"

"Quite on the contrary, general, they are pitying them."

"But what is the meaning of those bursts of laughter then?"

"It is not their fault, general; he would make a mile-stone laugh!"

"Who?"

"The surgeon Figeac, who is to be guillotined; he is cracking so many jokes from the top of the cart that even the condemned men are convulsed with laughter."

The general and his companions looked at each other.

"The time seems to me rather ill-chosen for mirth," said Pichegru.

"Well, he seems to have found a laughable side to death."

Just then the advance-guard of the procession came in sight, the men laughing heartily—not with a savage and insulting laugh, but with one that was natural and hearty. The immense cart, which was carrying twenty-two prisoners, bound two and two, to the execution, came in sight almost immediately. Pichegru stepped back, but Eisemberg called to him in a loud voice.

Pichegru paused.

Figeac, seeing that Eisemberg wished to speak, was silent, and the laughter ceased almost immediately. Eisemberg moved forward, dragging the man to whom he was bound with him, and standing up, said: "Pichegru, listen to me."

Those of the young men who had their caps or their hats on their heads removed them; Falou stood close to the window saluting.

"Pichegru," said the unhappy general, "I am going to die, and I shall gladly leave you the honors which your courage will bring you. I know that you do justice to my loyalty, that has been betrayed by the fate of war, and that you have secretly pitied me in my misfortune. I should like to predict a better end for you than mine, but you may not hope for it. Houchard and Custine are dead, I am to die, Beauharnais will die, and you will die like us. The people to whom you have devoted your sword are not sparing of the blood of their defenders, and if the hostile bullets spare you, you will not escape the executioner. Farewell, Pichegru! May Heaven preserve you from the jealousy of tyrants and the false justice of assassins. Farewell, my friend! Go on, now, you."

Pichegru greeted him with his hand, shut the window, and entered his room with his head bent and his arms folded, as if Eisemberg's words weighed heavy on his mind.

Then, suddenly raising his head, and addressing the young men who were looking at him in silence, he said: "Who among you knows Greek! I will give my best Cummer pipe to the one who can tell me the name of the Greek author who speaks of the prophecies of dying men."

"I know a little Greek, general," said Charles, "but I do not smoke at all."

"Well, then I will give you something that will please you more than a pipe."

"Well, general," said Charles, "it is Aristophanes, in a passage which may be translated somewhat as follows: 'Dying Hoary-heads have the souls of Sybils.'"

"Bravo," said Pichegru, patting his cheek, "to-morrow, or the day after, you shall have what I promised you." Then, turning to his aides-de-camp, he said, "Come, children, I am tired of these butcheries; we will leave Auenheim in two hours, and try to reach Drusenheim with our advance-posts. Death is but a trifle anywhere, and it becomes a pleasure on

the battlefield. Therefore let us fight."

Just then a government despatch was handed to Pichegru. It contained an order to join the Army of the Moselle, and to consider Hoche, who was commanding it, as his superior officer. The two armies, once this union had been effected, were to attack ceaselessly until the lines of Wissembourg had been retaken.

It was not necessary to change the orders already given. Pichegru put the despatch in his pocket, and knowing that the spy, Stephan, was waiting for him in his cabinet, he went in there, saying as he did so: "Citizens, hold yourselves in readiness to start at the first sound of the trumpet and the first roll of the drum."



CHAPTER XXI

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE

Pichegru proposed to recover the ground lost by his predecessor at the battle of Haguenau, which had followed the evacuation of the lines of Wissembourg. At that time General Carles had been obliged to move his headquarters across the river from Souffel to Schiltigheim; that is to say, to the very gates of Strasbourg.

It was there that Pichegru, chosen because of his plebeian birth, had taken command of the army, and, thanks to several successful actions, had carried his headquarters as far as Auenheim. For the same reason—plebeian birth—Hoche had been appointed to the command of the Army of the Moselle, and had been ordered to combine his movements with those of Pichegru.

The first battle of any importance was fought at Bercheim; it was there that they had captured the Comte de Sainte-Hermine, in a charge in which his horse had been killed under him. The Prince de Condé had his headquarters at Bercheim; and Pichegru, wishing to try the enemy's columns, while avoiding a general action, had attacked this position.

Repulsed the first time, he had renewed the attack by sending a body of skirmishers, divided into small companies, against the Prince de Condé the next day. These skirmishers, after harassing the enemy for a long time, united at a given signal, and, forming in a column, fell upon the village of Bercheim and took it. But struggles between Frenchmen do not end so easily. The Prince de Condé was behind the village with the battalions of nobles composing the infantry of his army; he made an assault at their head, attacked the Republicans in Bercheim, and made himself master of the village. Pichegru then sent his cavalry to the assistance of the skirmishers; the prince ordered his own to charge, and the two regiments fought with the violence of hate. The advantage remained with the royalist cavalry, which was better mounted than its opponents; the Republicans retreated, abandoning seven cannon and nine hundred men lost.

On their side the royalists lost three hundred cavalry and nine hundred infantry. The Duc de Bourbon, the Prince de Condé's son, was shot down just as he reached Bercheim, and his aides-de-camp were almost all killed or dangerously wounded. But Pichegru would not acknowledge himself beaten; the next day he attacked General Klénau's troops, who occupied a position near Bercheim. The enemy retreated at the first charge, but the Prince de Condé sent them a reinforcement of royalists, both cavalry and infantry.

The struggle became more deadly, and lasted for some time without any perceptible advantage on either side; finally the enemy retreated for the second time, and retired behind Haguenau, leaving the royalists exposed. The Prince de Condé deemed it imprudent to attempt to hold the position any longer, and retreated in good order; and the Republicans entered Bercheim behind him.

The news of the victory arrived at the same time as that of the defeat, and the one counterbalanced the other. Pichegru breathed more easily; the iron belt which was stifling Strasbourg was relieved by one notch.

This time, as Pichegru said, it was more to get away from Auenheim than to resume strategic movements that the army took up its march. However, as it would be necessary some day to recapture Haguenau, which was then occupied by the Austrians, they were, in passing, to attack the village of Dawendorff.

A belt of forest in the shape of a horseshoe, extended from Auenheim to Dawendorff; at eight o'clock in the evening, on a dark but fine winter's night, Pichegru gave the order to start. Charles, without being a good rider, could mount a horse. The general placed him paternally in the midst of his staff, and enjoined them all to look out for him. The army set off silently, for they intended to surprise the enemy.

The battalion of the Indre formed the advance-guard.

During the evening Pichegru had had the forest explored, and had been told that it was unguarded. At two in the morning they arrived at the extremity of the horseshoe-shaped forest. They were separated from the village of Dawendorff by about three miles of woodland. Pichegru gave the order to halt and bivouac.

It was impossible to leave the men without a fire on such a night, and, at the risk of being discovered, Pichegru gave the order for the men to light piles of wood, around which they bivouacked. They had about four hours before them.

During the entire march the general had kept his eye on Charles, to whom he had given a trumpeter's horse, with a saddle that was both high in front and back, and covered with sheepskin, so that it afforded a solid seat even for the most

inexperienced rider. But Pichegru saw with pleasure that his young secretary placed himself unhesitatingly in the saddle, and had managed his horse without awkwardness. When they reached the encampment, he himself showed him how to unsaddle and picket his horse, and make a pillow of the saddle. A good riding-coat, which had been put in his portmanteau at the general's direction, made a comfortable mattress and covering.

Charles, who had not lost his religious feelings in the midst of this age of irreligion, said his silent prayer, and went to sleep as peacefully as he would have done in his own room at Besançon.

Advance posts placed in the woods, and as sentinels on the flanks, which were relieved every half hour, watched over the safety of the little army. About four o'clock they were awakened by a shot fired by one of the sentinels, and, in an instant, every one was on his feet.

Pichegru glanced at Charles; he had run to his horse, taken the pistols from their holsters, and returned to the general's side, where he remained standing with a pistol in either hand.

The general sent twenty men in the direction whence the shot had been fired; as the sentinel had not repeated the shot, the probability was that he had been killed. But when they approached the spot where he had been posted, the men heard him calling for help; they hastened their steps, and saw, not men, but beasts, who were put to flight by their appearance.

The sentinel had been attacked by a band of five or six famished wolves, who had at first prowled around him, and then, seeing that he stood perfectly still, had become bolder. In order not to be attacked from behind, he had put his back to a tree and for a time had defended himself silently with his bayonet; but finally a wolf had seized the bayonet in his teeth, and then the sentinel had fired upon him, shooting the beast through the head. The wolves, frightened by the report, had at first slunk away, but then, driven by hunger, they had returned, perhaps as much for the sake of eating their comrade as to attack the sentinel. They came back so swiftly that the soldier had not had time to reload his gun. He had therefore defended himself as best he could, and they had already made several attempts to bite him when his comrades came to his aid and drove away the unexpected enemy.

The sub-lieutenant who commanded the squad left four men on guard in the sentinel's place and returned to the camp, taking with him as trophies the skins of the two wolves, the one killed by a bullet, the other by a bayonet. The skins, thickly furred for the winter time, were to be made into rugs for the general.

The soldier was taken before Pichegru, who received him coldly, thinking that the shot was due to carelessness; his brow grew darker and darker as he listened, and learned that the soldier had fired to defend himself from the wolves.

"Do you know," said he, "that I ought to have you shot for firing upon anything except the enemy?"

"But what should I have done, general?" asked the poor devil, so ingenuously that the general smiled in spite of himself.

"You ought to have allowed yourself to be eaten to the last morsel rather than have fired a shot which might have alarmed the enemy, and which has aroused the whole army."

"I did think of that, general; and you see that the rascals began," and he showed his bleeding arms and cheeks. "But I said to myself, 'Faraud (that is my name, general), they have placed you here to prevent the enemy from passing, and they count on you to prevent them from passing.'"

"Well?" asked Pichegru.

"Well, if I had been eaten, general, there would have been no one to prevent the enemy from passing; it was that thought which determined me to fire. I give you my word of honor that the question of personal safety did not come till later."

"But this shot may have awakened the enemy's advance-posts."

"Don't worry about that, general; if they heard it, they have taken it for a mere poacher's shot."

"Are you a Parisian?"

"Yes, but I belong to the first battalion of the Indre; I am a volunteer."

"Well, Faraud, the only advice I have to give you is not to let me see you again until you have won your corporal's stripes, so that I may forget the breach of discipline which you have committed to-day."

"What shall I do to win them, general?"

"You must bring two Prussian prisoners to your captain to-morrow, or rather, to-day."

"Soldiers or officers, general?"

"Officers would be better, but privates will do."

"I shall do my best, general."

"Who has some brandy?" asked Pichegru.

"I have," said Doumerc.

"Well, give this coward a drink; he has promised to bring us two prisoners to-morrow."

"Suppose I only make one, general?"

"Then you will only be half a corporal, and will only have one stripe to wear."

"Oh! that would make me squint! To-morrow evening I shall have them both, general, or you may say, 'Faraud is dead.' To your health, general!"

"General," said Charles to Pichegru, "it was with words like those that Cæsar made his Gauls invincible."



CHAPTER XXII

THE BATTLE

The army was awake and desirous of marching; and as it was nearly five o'clock, the general gave the order to start, telling the soldiers that they should breakfast at Dawendorff, and that they were to have a double ration of brandy.

Skirmishers were thrown out to capture the sentinels as they passed; then they left the woods in three columns, one of which seized and occupied Kaltenhausen, while the other two, to the right and left of the village, drawing their light artillery after them, spread out over the plain, and marched straight for Dawendorff.

The enemy had been surprised in Kaltenhausen, and had therefore made little resistance; but the firing had given the alarm to Dawendorff, and the troops could be seen drawn up in line of battle.

A slight eminence rose at a distance of about half a cannon-shot from the village; the general put his horse to a gallop, and, followed by his staff, gained the summit of the rise, whence he could see the whole field of battle.

When he left, he directed General Macdonald to take the first battalion of the Indre, which formed the head of the column, and dislodge the enemy from Dawendorff.

He kept the eighth chasseurs near him as a reserve, and in front he posted a battery of six guns. The battalion of the Indre, followed by the rest of the army, strategically disposed, marched straight upon the enemy. Intrenchments had been thrown up outside the village. When the Republicans were not more than two hundred yards away, Pichegru made a sign, and his artillery covered the breastworks with a leaden hail. The Prussians on their side replied with a well-directed fire, which killed about fifty. But the brave battalions which formed the attacking column went steadily forward, and, preceded by beating drums, charged the enemy with the bayonet.

Already harassed by the grape-shot which the general had turned upon them, the enemy abandoned the intrenchments, and the Republicans poured into the village with the Prussians. But in the meantime two large bodies of troops appeared on either side of the village; they were the royalist cavalry and infantry, commanded by the Prince de Condé and the Duc de Bourbon. The two bodies threatened to attack the little army in the rear, as it stood ranged in battle, as it were, behind the battalion of the Indre, of which a part was following it.

Pichegru immediately despatched Captain Gaume, one of his aides-de-camp, to order General Michaud, who commanded the centre, to form his men in a hollow square, and to receive the enemy's charge with the bayonet.

Then calling Abatucci on the other side, he ordered him to put himself at the head of the second regiment of chasseurs and to charge the royalist infantry when he judged that the grape-shot had thrown their lines into sufficient disorder.

From the top of the little hill where he stood fearlessly beside the general, Charles saw, below him, Pichegru and the Prince de Condé, or, in other words, the revolution and the counter-revolution, play at that terrible game of chess which is called war.

He saw Captain Gaume cross at a gallop the broad open space which lay to the left of the hill occupied by Pichegru, to carry the general-in-chief's order to the adjutant-general, Michaud, who had at that very moment perceived that his left was threatened by the Prince de Condé and had anticipated the order sent him.

On the right he saw Captain Abatucci take the head of the chasseurs, and descend the hill at a gentle trot, while three volleys of the cannon, fired one after the other, raked the mass of infantry which was approaching.

There was a movement of hesitation in the royalist ranks by which Abatucci profited. He ordered his men to draw their swords, and on the instant six hundred blades glittered in the rays of the sun.

The Duc de Bourbon attempted to form his men into a square, but either the confusion was too great or the order was given too late. The charge came like the deluge of a waterspout, and cavalry and infantry were seen fighting hand to hand, while, on the other side, Adjutant-General Michaud's men fired when they were not twenty-five feet away.

It would be impossible to describe the effect of this volley, fired at such close quarters. More than a hundred riders fell, some, impelled by their own momentum, rolling as far as the first ranks of the square. The prince then retired to reform his cavalry out of range of the cannon-shot.

At the same moment the battalion of the Indre was seen to retreat, although slowly. They had found the village occupied

in force, and had been received by firing from every window, and also from two pieces of cannon which were set up within the village as a battery. The regiment had been obliged to fall back.

The general sent his fourth aide-de-camp, Chaumette, at full gallop to find out what had happened and to direct Macdonald to hold the position at any cost.

Chaumette crossed the field under fire of both the royalists and the Republicans, and halted within a few feet of the intrenchments to deliver his message. Macdonald replied that he certainly should not yield the position, and that furthermore, as soon as the men had taken breath, he should make a new attempt to recapture the village of Dawendorff. But in order to facilitate the success of the movement he wished that some diversion could be made to draw off the enemy's attention for a few moments.

Chaumette returned to Pichegru, who was stationed so near the battlefield that it took only a few moments to deliver his messages and return to him with the answers.

"Take twenty-five chasseurs and four trumpeters from Abatucci," said Pichegru; "go round the village and enter the street opposite to where Doumerc will charge; have the trumpets blown as loudly as possible while Macdonald charges; the enemy will thus think it is caught between two fires and will yield."

Chaumette rode down the slope of the hill again, reached Abatucci, exchanged a few words with him, took the twenty-five men, and sent another to tell Macdonald to charge, and that he was to attack the enemy in the rear at the same time.

Macdonald immediately raised his sword, the drums beat the charge, and, amid a terrible rattle of musketry, he boldly re-entered the village. Almost at the same moment Chaumette's trumpets were heard at the other end of the village.

The disorder now became general. The Prince de Condé turned upon Michaud and his battalion, which had formed in a square. The royalist infantry began to beat a retreat before Abatucci and the eighth chasseurs; and Pichegru sent half of his reserve, about four or five hundred men, to the assistance of the battalion of the Indre, keeping the other four or five hundred with him to use in case of some unexpected emergency. As the royalist infantry retreated they fired a last volley, not at Abatucci and his chasseurs, but at the group upon the hill, where the Republican general was easily recognized by his plume and his gold epaulets.

Two men fell. The general's horse, struck in the chest, leaped in the air. Charles uttered a sigh and fell forward in his saddle.

"Ah! poor child!" cried Pichegru; "Larrey, Larrey!"

A young surgeon about twenty-six or seven approached. They held the boy upon his horse, and, as in falling he had pressed his hand to his breast, they opened his vest. The general's surprise was great when they discovered a foraging cap between the waistcoat and his shirt. They shook the cap and a bullet fell out.

"It is useless to seek further," said the surgeon; "the shirt is intact and there is no blood. The boy is not strong and the violence of the blow has made him faint. This foraging cap, which would have been of no protection in its proper place, has saved his life here. Give him some brandy and he will be all right."

"How strange," said Pichegru; "this cap belongs to the chasseurs of Condé's army."

Just then Charles revived, and his first movement, on coming to himself, was to look for the foraging cap. He was about to ask for it when he saw it in the general's hand. "Ah! general," he said, "pardon me."

"You may well ask pardon for having given us such a fright."

"Oh! not that," said Charles, smiling and pointing to the cap which Pichegru held in his hand.

"You must explain this to me," said Pichegru.

Charles came close to the general and said in a low voice: "That belongs to the Comte de Sainte-Hermine, that young noble who was shot; and when he was dying he asked me to give it to his family."

"But," said Pichegru, feeling it, "there is a letter inside."

"Yes, general; to his brother. The poor fellow feared it might be lost if he gave it to a stranger."

"While in confiding it to some one from his own part of the country he had nothing to fear, I suppose."

"Have I done wrong, general?"

"It is never wrong to fulfil the wish of a dying man, particularly when that wish is an honorable one. I may even say that it is a sacred duty to do so as soon as possible."

"But I shall probably not return to Besançon at once."

"If I try, perhaps I can find some excuse for sending you there."

"Not because you are displeased with, me, general?" asked the boy, with tears in his eyes.

"No; I will give you some commission which shall prove to your compatriots that the Jura has still another boy in the service of the Republic. Now let us see what is going on yonder."

In a few moments Charles forgot his own accident as his eyes wandered over the battlefield and the town; he held his breath in the absorbing interest of the sight, and, touching the general on the arm, pointed to the men running over roofs, jumping out of windows, and climbing over garden walls in their haste to reach the plain.

"Good," said Pichegru, "we are masters of the town, and the day is ours." Then, turning to Lieber, the only one of his officers near him, he said: "Take command of the reserve and prevent these men from rallying."

Lieber put himself at the head of the four or five hundred men and descended upon the village.

"Now," continued Pichegru with his usual calmness, "let us go to the village and see what is happening."

And accompanied only by twenty-five or thirty chasseurs of the rear-guard, together with General Boursier and Charles, he set off at a gallop on the road to Dawendorff.

Charles cast a last glance at the plain; the enemy were fleeing in all directions. This was the first time that he had seen a battle; he was now to see a battlefield. He had seen the poetical side—the movement, the fire, the smoke; but the distance had concealed all the details. He was now to see the hideous side—the agony, the immobility of death: he was about to enter upon the bloody reality.

CHAPTER XXIII

AFTER THE BATTLE

The short distance that the little troop was obliged to cover in order to reach the plain was entirely bare, except for the wounded, the dead, and the dying. The fight had lasted barely an hour and a half, but more than fifteen hundred men lay strewn upon the battlefield.

Charles approached the line of dead with a certain degree of apprehension; at the first corpse that his horse encountered the animal shied so violently that the boy was nearly thrown. Pichegru's horse, held in better check, or perhaps better accustomed to such scenes, leaped over the obstacles; in time Charles's horse was forced to follow his example and to leap over the dead.

It was not, however, the dead that made the most impression upon Charles, but the wounded, who sought to drag themselves from beneath the hoofs of the horses of the general and his staff, by a supreme effort, or lay horribly mutilated and muttering, the death-rattle in their throats: "Comrades, for mercy's sake despatch me! despatch me!"

Others again, those who were not so grievously wounded, raised themselves upon their elbows, and, waving their caps, cried: "Long live the Republic!"

"Is this the first time that you have ever seen a battlefield?" asked Pichegru.

"No, general," replied the boy.

"Where have you seen one before?"

"In Tacitus—that of Teutberg, with Germanicus and Cecina."

"Ah, yes," replied Pichegru, "I remember: it is when Germanicus, just before he reaches the forest, finds the eagle of the nineteenth legion which was lost with Varus."

"And do you remember that passage, general, which I understand so well now—'All the army were filled with pity as they thought of relatives, friends, the chances of war, and the destiny of men'?"

"Yes," said Pichegru. "'There were,' said Tacitus, 'in the midst of the vast clearing, whitening bones scattered where the men had fled, and lying in heaps where they had fought.' Oh! I wish I could remember the Latin text, which no translation can equal; wait: 'Medio—'"

"I remember it, general," said Charles; "'Medio campi albentia ossa ut fugerant, ut resisterant.'"

"Well done, Charles," said Pichegru; "your father made me a fine gift when he sent you to me!"

"General," asked Charles, "are you not going to send help to these poor wounded men?"

"Don't you see the surgeons who are going from one to the other, regardless of whether they are friends or enemies? We have gained at least this much in eighteen hundred years of civilization; we do not cut the throats of prisoners upon the altars of Teutates, as in the time of Armin and Marbod."

"And," said Charles, "the conquered generals are not obliged to kill themselves like Varus, *infelice dextra*."

"Do you think," said Pichegru, laughing, "that it is preferable to be sent to the Revolutionary tribunal like that poor Eisemberg, whose head is constantly before my eyes and whose words are constantly in my mind?"

While they were thus talking they had entered the town. Perhaps the sight was even more terrible there, because the carnage was confined to a smaller space. The fighting had been carried on from house to house. Before trying to escape from the roofs and windows, the Prussians, and particularly a small body of royalists who had remained in the town, had made a desperate defence. When their cartridges were exhausted they had seized upon any weapon that came to hand, and had thrown cupboards, bureaus, chairs, and even marbles from the mantel down upon their assailants from the third story windows. Some of the houses were on fire, and as there was nothing left inside to burn, their ruined proprietors, judging it useless to stop the conflagration, stood and watched their possessions burn.

Pichegru gave directions that fires should be put out as soon as possible, and then he went to the town-hall, where he always chose to lodge when on a campaign. There he received his reports.

On entering the court he perceived an ammunition wagon, carefully guarded, bearing the blue coat of arms and the three fleur-de-lis of France; it had been captured at M. de Condé's lodgings. Thinking it of importance, it had been brought to the town-hall, where, as we have said, the general was to lodge.

"Very good," said Pichegru, "I will have the wagon opened in the presence of the staff."

He dismounted, went upstairs, and took up his quarters in the council-chamber, where the officers who had taken part in the engagement arrived one after the other.

The first to come was Captain Gaume. Desiring to take part in the engagement, he had joined the square formed by General Michaud's command, and after three charges, as boldly executed as they were useless, he had seen the Prince de Condé retreat, by a wide circle, in the direction of Haguenau, leaving about two hundred of his men upon the field of battle.

General Michaud was providing lodgings for his soldiers, and had given orders for rations of bread to be cooked and sent to the neighboring villages from Dawendorff.

Then came Chaumette. In pursuance of the general's orders, he had taken his twenty-five men and entered the village at the other end, sounding the charge as boldly as if he had been at the head of six hundred men. The ruse had succeeded; the Prussians and the small body of royalists who were defending the town, believing themselves attacked in front and in the rear at the same time, had fled over the roofs of the houses, as Charles had pointed out to the general.

The next to arrive was Abatucci. He had received a sword-cut in his cheek, and his shoulder, moreover, had been dislocated. The general had noted the splendid courage with which he had charged at the head of his chasseurs; but when they reached the Prussians, the encounter had become a hand-to-hand fight and the individuals had been lost sight of.

Abatucci's horse had been struck by a bullet in the head and had fallen. While endeavoring to extricate himself, Abatucci had been struck by a sabre and had his shoulder dislocated. For a moment he thought himself lost; but a detachment of chasseurs had saved him. Nevertheless, on foot, in the midst of this terrible disorder, he had been in the greatest danger, until the chasseur Falou, the one the general had questioned the previous evening about Eisemberg, had brought him a horse which he had taken from an officer whom he had killed. At such times there is little time for words; Abatucci had grasped the reins with one hand, while with the other he had offered his purse to the chasseur. The latter refused the officer's gift, and as he was carried away by the rush of the combat, Abatucci called after him: "We shall meet again!"

Consequently when he entered the town-hall, Abatucci instituted a search for the chasseur. The young aide-de-camp's force had killed about two hundred men and captured one flag, while they themselves had lost only about eight or ten men.

Macdonald waited until Abatucci had finished his report before beginning his. At the head of the battalion of the Indre he had borne the brunt of the battle, receiving at first the fire from the intrenchments, and then entering the town. We know how he had been received there. Each house had vomited flames like a volcano; but in spite of the rain of bullets, which had greatly reduced his forces, he had continued to advance, until, turning into the principal street of the town, he had been confronted with two cannon, which had poured forth grape-shot at a distance of only five hundred feet. It was then that the battalion of the Indre had had to beat a retreat, and had fallen back without leaving the town.

True to his promise, Macdonald, after giving his men time to breathe, had re-entered the town, and, animated by the trumpets sounding at the other end of the village, his force reached the great square, intending to capture the two cannon. But the chasseurs had already taken possession of them.

From that moment the village of Dawendorff was won. Besides the two cannon, a military wagon, or caisson, as we have said, bearing the fleur-de-lis of France, had fallen into the hands of the victorious army.

The general, thinking that it might contain money belonging to the Prince de Condé, had given orders to have it opened in the presence of his staff.

Lieber arrived last. Followed by Abatucci's chasseurs, he had pursued the enemy for more than three miles, and had taken three hundred prisoners.

The day had been fortunate; they had slain about a thousand of the enemy, and upward of six hundred had been taken prisoner.

Larrey set Abatucci's dislocated shoulder.

The members of the staff being all present, they went down into the court and a locksmith was sent for. There was one near at hand, and he came shortly, bringing his instruments. In a moment the cover was raised; they found one of the compartments filled with long rolls like cartridges. They broke one and found that it contained gold. Each roll contained one hundred guineas—two thousand five hundred francs, stamped with the effigy of King George. There were three hundred and ten rolls, making in all seven hundred and seventy-five thousand francs.

"Faith!" said Pichegru, "this is wonderfully fortunate; we will use it to pay the soldiers. Are you there, Estève?"

Estève was the paymaster of the Army of the Rhine.

"Have you ascertained how much is due the men?"

"About five hundred thousand francs. I will show you my accounts."

"Take five hundred thousand francs at once, citizen Estève," said Pichegru, laughing, "and pay the men. You will use the ground floor for your office. I will take the next story."

The five hundred thousand francs were counted out to citizen Estève.

"Now," continued Pichegru, "there are twenty-five thousand francs to be divided among the battalion of the Indre, which has suffered the most."

"That is about thirty-nine francs for each man," said citizen Estève.

"You will keep fifty thousand francs for the need of the army."

"And the remaining two hundred thousand francs?"

"Abatucci shall carry them to the Convention, with the flag we have captured; it is well to show the world that Republicans do not fight for money. Let us go upstairs, citizens," continued Pichegru, "and leave citizen Estève to his work."

CHAPTER XXIV

CITIZEN FENOUILLOT, COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER FOR CHAMPAGNE

Pichegru's *valet de chambre*, who had the good sense not to change his title for that of an official, and his name of Leblanc for that of Lerouge, had, in the meantime, set the table for breakfast, and covered it with the provisions which he had brought with him—a necessary precaution when, as now, they passed from the battlefield to the breakfast table.

Our young men, wearied, hungry, some of them even wounded, were not insensible to the prospect of breakfast, of which they felt the greatest need. But the cheers of satisfaction redoubled when they saw among a number of bottles, whose simplicity denoted their democratic origin, six others with silver collars, showing that they belonged to the best houses of Champagne.

Pichegru himself noticed it, and, turning to his valet, said with military freedom: "Ah, Leblanc, is it my birthday or yours? Or is it simply to celebrate our victory of to-day that we find such wine upon my table? Do you know that I should get my throat cut for this if it were reported to the Committee of Public Safety?"

"Citizen general," replied the valet, "those are not the reasons, although, for that matter, your victory deserves to be celebrated; and on a day when you have taken seven hundred and fifty thousand francs you may well drink twenty francs' worth of champagne without wronging the government. No, general, do not let your conscience trouble you; the champagne which you will drink to-day will cost neither you nor the government a penny."

"I hope, rascal," said Pichegru, laughing, "that it has not been stolen from some wine merchant, or pillaged from some cellar?"

"No, general, it was a patriotic gift."

"A patriotic gift?"

"Yes, from citizen Fenouillot."

"Who is citizen Fenouillot? Is that the lawyer at Besançon; for there is such a lawyer at Besançon, is there not, Charles?"

"Yes," replied the boy, "he is one of my father's best friends."

"He has nothing to do with lawyers, or with Besançon either for that matter," said Leblanc, who was permitted to speak freely with the general; "he is citizen Fenouillot, commercial traveller for the house of Fraissinet of Châlons, who, in gratitude for the service you have done him in delivering him out of the hands of the enemy, has sent you these six bottles of wine, so that you may drink them to your own health and to that of the Republic."

"Then your citizen Fenouillot was here with the enemy?"

"Certainly, since he was a prisoner, he and his samples."

"Do you hear, general?" asked Abatucci.

"Perhaps he might be able to give us some useful information," suggested Doumerc.

"Where does your citizen live?" asked Pichegru.

"Here, in the hotel to the left of the town-hall."

"Put on an extra plate—there, just opposite mine—and then go tell citizen Fenouillot that I request the pleasure of his company at breakfast with us. Gentlemen, take your customary places while we are waiting."

The officers seated themselves as usual, and Pichegru put Charles at his left.

Leblanc put on the extra plate and then went out.

Five minutes later he returned. He had found citizen Fenouillot just about to sit down to breakfast, but he had eagerly accepted the general's invitation. Consequently, he was following the messenger who had been sent for him; and, in fact, a moment after Leblanc had returned, some one knocked at the door, giving the Masonic raps.

Leblanc hastened to open it.

A man about thirty-five years of age stood upon the threshold, attired in the civilian's dress of that period—a pointed,

broad-brimmed hat, a loose cravat, and a waistcoat with large lapels. He had on a brown coat with long skirts, tight, light-colored trousers and top boots; his complexion was fair and his hair curled naturally; he had brown eyebrows and whiskers, the latter half-hidden in his cravat. His eyes were bold, his nose was large and his lips were thin. As he entered the dining-room, Fenouillot hesitated slightly.

"Come in, citizen Fenouillot," said Pichegru, who had seen the hesitation, slight as it was.

"Upon my word," said the latter easily, "the thing was of so little consequence that I hesitated to believe that your kind invitation was intended for me."

"What of little consequence? Do you know that, with my allowance of five hundred francs a day, I should have to go three days without eating in order to afford fare like this? So sit down opposite me, citizen. Take your place!"

The two officers who were appointed to sit beside him moved their chairs and pointed to his. Citizen Fenouillot sat down, and the general cast a rapid glance at his snow-white linen and his carefully kept hands.

"And you were a prisoner when we entered Dawendorff?"

"About that, general. I did not know the road to Haguenau was invested until I was stopped by some Prussians, who were preparing to drink my samples when, happily, an officer arrived who took me to the commander-in-chief. I thought I had nothing more to fear than the loss of my samples, and was already consoling myself with that notion when the word 'spy' fell upon my ears. At that, as you can readily understand, I began to think, and then I asked to be taken to the commander of the royalists."

"The Prince de Condé?"

"I would have asked for the devil himself, as you can well imagine! They took me to the Prince, who examined my papers, and as I answered all his questions frankly, and he saw, after tasting my wine, that it was not of a kind that a dishonest man would carry, he told his allies, the Prussians, that I was a Frenchman, and that he would detain me as his prisoner."

"And was your detention hard?" asked Abatucci, while Pichegru regarded his guest with a scrutiny that showed he was rather inclined to share the Prussian general's opinion.

"Not at all," replied citizen Fenouillot; "the Prince and his son liked my wine, and they treated me with a consideration almost equal to that which you have shown me, although I must confess that when the news of the capitulation of Toulon arrived, yesterday, and I, as a good Frenchman, could not conceal my delight, the Prince, with whom I was talking at the time, dismissed me in a very bad humor."

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed Pichegru; "then Toulon has really been recaptured from the English?"

"Yes, general."

"What day was Toulon taken?"

"The 19th."

"And to-day is the 21st. Impossible! The devil! the Prince de Condé has not the telegraph at his disposal."

"No," replied the other; "but he has the pigeon-post, and carrier-pigeons travel forty-eight miles an hour. In short, the news came to Strasbourg, where pigeons abound, and I myself saw the little note in the Prince's hands. The note was small, having been fastened under the bird's wing, but the writing was fine, and therefore it contained several details."

"And do you know what they were?"

"The city capitulated on the 19th. That same day part of the besieging army entered, and, in the evening, by order of the commissioner of the Convention, two hundred and thirteen persons were shot."

"Is that all? Did it not mention a certain Buonaparte?"

"Yes, indeed; it said that the capture of the city was due to him."

"He is certainly my cousin," said Abatucci, laughing.

"And my pupil," added Pichegru. "Faith, so much the better! The Republic needs men of genius to offset such wretches as Fouché."

"Fouché?"

"Was it not Fouché who followed the French army to Lyons, and on the first day he was in power ordered two hundred and thirteen men shot?"

"Ah, yes; but that was at Lyons. At Toulon it is citizen Barras."

"And who is citizen Barras?"

"Only a deputy from the Var, who has served in India, and learned there to imitate the habits of the Nabobs. At the Convention he sits with the Mountain. At all events; it looks as if they were going to shoot all the population, and raze the town."

"Let them destroy and shoot! The sooner they do it, the quicker they will get through," said Pichegru. "Faith! I prefer our former good God to the modern Supreme Being who permits such horrors."

"And what do they say of my cousin Buonaparte?"

"They say that he is a young artillery officer," continued citizen Fenouillot, "and a friend of young Robespierre."

"Come, general," said Abatucci, "if he is on such good terms with the Jacobins as that, he will make his way and protect us in the bargain."

"Speaking of protection," said citizen Fenouillot, "is what the Duc de Bourbon told me when he was eulogizing you true?"

"Very kind of the Duc de Bourbon," said Pichegru, laughing. "What did he tell you?"

"That it was his father, the Prince de Condé, to whom you owed your first promotion."

"Yes," replied Pichegru.

"How was that?" asked three or four voices.

"I was serving as a common soldier in the royal artillery, when one day the Prince de Condé, who was present at the battery exercises at Besançon, came over to the gun which he considered the best managed; but while the gunner was sponging the piece it went off and shot away his arm. The prince attributed this accident to me, accusing me of not having properly closed the orifice with my thumb. I let him talk, and my only reply was to show him my bleeding hand. My thumb was turned back, and almost torn from the hand. Here," he continued, holding out his hand; "here is the scar. The prince forthwith promoted me to the rank of sergeant."

Little Charles, who was near the general, took his hand as if he wanted to examine it, and with a sudden movement stooped and kissed it.

"Why, what are you doing?" asked Pichegru, pulling his hand away quickly.

"I? Nothing," said Charles. "I admire you."

CHAPTER XXV

CHASSEUR FALOU AND CORPORAL FARAUD

Just then the door opened, and the chasseur Falou appeared, led by two of his comrades.

"Your pardon, captain," said one of the soldiers to Abatucci; "but you said you wanted to see him, did you not?"

"Of course I want to see him."

"There, is it true?" asked the soldier.

"It must be so, as the captain says it is."

"Just imagine, he did not want to come; we had to drag him here by main force."

"Why didn't you want to come?" asked Abatucci.

"Oh! I thought it was just to say silly things to me."

"What do you mean?"

"See here, general; I will make you the judge."

"I am listening to you, Falou."

"Why, you know my name!" Then, turning to his comrades, he cried, "Say, the general knows my name."

"I have said that I am listening to you; what is it you wish to say?" asked the general.

"Well, general, this is how it happened; we were charging, weren't we?"

"Yes."

"My horse shied to avoid stepping on a wounded man—you know those animals are so intelligent."

"Yes, I know."

"And mine especially. I found myself face to face with one of those emigrated nobles. Ah! he was a fine young fellow, not more than twenty-two at the most. When he aimed a blow at my head I had to defend myself—"

"Certainly."

"And to return the blow; there was no other way, was there?"

"No, of course not."

"One doesn't need to be a provost to know that! He fell. He had swallowed more than six inches of steel."

"That was certainly more than he needed."

"Yes, general," said Falou, laughing at the joke he had in mind to say, "but one can't always stop to measure."

"I was not blaming you, Falou."

"Well, then, he fell, and there was a magnificent horse without a rider. I took him by the bridle, and just then I saw the captain, who had no horse at all, and so I said to myself: 'This horse belongs to the captain.' I put spurs to him, and he struggled like the devil in holy water in the midst of five or six aristocrats. I killed one and wounded another. 'Come, captain!' I called out to him, 'put your foot in the stirrup.' When his foot was in the stirrup it did not take him long to mount, and that's all there is to it."

"No, that is not all; for you cannot make me a present of a horse."

"Why can't I make you a present of a horse? Are you too proud to take it from me?"

"No; and to prove it, my brave fellow, will you do me the honor to put your hand there."

"The honor will be mine, captain," said Falou, advancing toward Abatucci.

The officer and the soldier clasped hands.

"Now I am paid, and I even owe you something; but no money, captain," said Falou.

"Very well; you have exposed your life for me, and—"

"Exposed my life for you?" cried Falou. "I defended it, that was all. Would you like to see how the aristocrat went? Here!"

Falou drew out his sword and showed the blade, of which an inch and a half was broken off.

"You can see that my hand was not weak; but we are well cared for, captain, and I shall get another sword. But sell you a horse—I, Falou? Never! Never!"

And Falou had already reached the door, when the general spoke to him.

"Come here, my brave fellow."

Falou turned around, trembling with emotion, and saluted.

"You are a Franc-Comtois?"

"A little, general."

"From what part?"

"Boussière."

"Are your parents still living?"

"I have an old mother. Can I call that parents?"

"Yes. And what does your old mother do?"

"Oh! poor dear woman, she knits my socks and spins my shirts."

"And how does she support herself?"

"With what I send her. But as the Republic is in debt, and my pay is five months in arrears, she cannot be getting along very well. But, thanks to the Prince de Condé's treasure wagon, we shall be paid up. Noble prince, how my mother will bless him!"

"What, your mother will bless an enemy of France?"

"How will she know the difference? The good God will know that she is in her dotage."

"Then you are going to send her your pay?"

"Oh! I shall keep a bit for a drop of wine."

"Keep it all."

"And the old woman?"

"I will take care of her."

"General," said Falou, shaking his head, "I don't understand."

"Let me see your sword."

Falou unbuckled his sword and handed it to the general.

"Oh!" said Falou, "it's in a sorry condition."

"In other words," said the general, drawing his from its scabbard, "it is not fit for use. Take mine." And Pichegru, unbuckling his own sword, gave it to him.

"But, general, what shall I do with your sword?"

"You will defend yourself, and return blow for blow."

"I should never dare to use it."

"Then you will let it be taken from you."

"I! I will defend it with my life." Then, putting the hilt of the sword to his lips, he kissed it.

"That will do. When the sword of honor that I have sent for comes, you can return me this one."

"Oh!" said Falou, "if it is all the same to you, general, I would rather keep this one."

"Well, then, keep it, animal; and do not put on so many airs."

"Oh! comrades!" cried Falou, darting out of the room, "the general called me animal, and gave me his sword! Long live the Republic!"

"Very fine," said a voice in the corridor; "but that is no reason for overturning your friends, particularly when they come as ambassadors to the general."

"What is the meaning of that?" said Pichegru. "Go see, Charles, and receive these ambassadors."

Charles, delighted to have an active share in the proceedings, darted to the door, and returned in a moment, saying: "General, they are delegates from the regiment of the Indre, who have come in the name of their comrades, with Corporal Faraud at their head."

"Who is Corporal Faraud?"

"The man of the wolves last night."

"But last night he was a common soldier."

"And now, general, he is a corporal; to be sure his stripes are made of paper."

"Paper stripes?" said the general, frowning.

"Oh! I don't know," said Charles.

"Admit the citizen delegates of the regiment of the Indre."

Two soldiers entered behind Faraud, who proudly displayed the paper stripes on his sleeves.

"What does this mean?" asked Pichegru.

"General," replied Faraud, carrying his hand to his cap, "we are delegates from the regiment of the Indre."

"Ah, yes," said Pichegru, "who have come to thank me for the favor I have just done them."

"On the contrary, general, we have come to refuse."

"To refuse? and why?" asked Pichegru.

"Confound it, general," said Faraud, with a twist of the neck peculiar to himself, "they say they fight for the glory of the Republic, for the preservation of the rights of man, and for nothing else. As for what they have done, they say it is no more than what their comrades have done, and they deserve no greater reward than the others. They have heard that they have only to go to citizen Estève to receive their back pay. If this incredible news is true, then that is all they want." And Faraud ended with the same peculiar twist of the neck by means of which he expressed all his emotions, whether sad or gay.

"Then they refuse?" asked Pichegru.

"Flatly," replied Faraud.

"And the dead," asked Pichegru; "do they refuse?"

"Who?"

"The dead."

"They have not been consulted, general."

"Then you may say to your comrades that I never take back what I have once given; the bounty money that I gave to the living will be distributed among the fathers and mothers, the brothers and sisters, the sons and daughters of the dead. Have you any objections to make to that?"

"None, general."

"That is fortunate. And now come here."

"I, general?" asked Faraud with a twist of the neck.

"Yes, you."

"Here I am, general."

"What are those sardines there?" asked Pichegru.

"Those are my corporal's stripes."

"Why paper?"

"Because we had no woollen stuff."

"Who made you a corporal?"

"My captain."

"What is your captain's name?"

"René Savary."

"I know him; he is a lad of nineteen or twenty."

"But who can strike hard just the same, general."

"Why did he make you a corporal?"

"You know well enough," said Faraud, with his customary gesture.

"Why no, I do not."

"You told me to make two prisoners."

"Well?"

"I made them; two Prussians."

"Is that true?"

"You can read it on my stripes"; and he raised his arm so that Pichegru could read the two lines of writing on them. He read:

Fusileer Faraud, of the Second Battalion of the Indre, has taken two Prussians prisoner; by reason of which I have appointed him corporal, subject to the approval of the commander-in-chief.

RENÉ SAVARY.

"I really took three prisoners," said Faraud, coming closer to the general.

"Where is the third?"

"The third was a fine young man, an aristocrat. You would have had to shoot him, which would have pained you, or to spare him, which would have compromised you."

"Well? and so—"

"And so, I let him—I let him go; there!"

"Good," said Pichegru, with tears in his eyes, "I make you a sergeant."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE PRINCE'S ENVOY

The chasseur Falou and the corporal Faraud have not, I hope, made you forget the citizen Fenouillot, commercial traveller for the house of Fraissinet at Châlons, nor the six bottles of champagne which he in his gratitude offered to Pichegru.

There was still one of these bottles to empty when the general returned to his place at table. Citizen Fenouillot opened it, or rather tried to do so, but in so unskilful a manner that Pichegru smiled and took the bottle from his hand; then cutting the cords, he opened the wires with the thumb of his left hand, which had retained all its strength.

"Come, citizen," said he, "a last glass to the prosperity of the arms of the Republic."

The commercial traveller raised his glass higher than any of the others.

"And," he added, "may the general finish gloriously what he has already gloriously begun."

All the officers joined noisily in the proposed toast.

"And now," said Pichegru, "as I agree with the toast which the citizen has just proposed, we have not an instant to lose. To-day's fight is but the prelude to two more serious battles; for we must win two more in order to regain the lines of Weissembourg, which were lost by my predecessor. The day after to-morrow we will attack Froeschwiller; in four days the line, in five we shall be at Weissembourg, and in six we shall have relieved Landau." Then, addressing Macdonald, he said: "My dear colonel, you are, as you know, my right hand. I intrust to you the duty of visiting all the posts, and of telling each corps which one it is to occupy. You are to command the left wing, and Abatucci the right; I will be in the centre. See that the soldiers want for nothing. No superfluities, but they must have a little more than the necessaries." Then he said to the other officers: "You all know the regiments under your command, citizens; you know those on whom you can depend. Call their officers together and tell them that I am writing to-day to the Committee of Public Safety that we shall sleep at Froeschwiller the day after to-morrow. Also that in eight days at the latest we shall be at Landau; and let them remember one thing, that if that promise is broken, my head will pay the forfeit."

The officers rose, and, buckling on their swords, they prepared to leave the room to execute the orders they had received.

"As for you, Charles," continued Pichegru, "go into the room which has been made ready for us, and see if the mattresses are in their proper places. You will find on a chair a little package addressed to you; open it, and, if the contents pleases you, use it at once, for it belongs to you. If you feel any pain from the concussion you have received, tell me of it, and not the surgeon."

"Thanks, general," answered Charles; "but I do not need any other compresses there than the one which stopped the bullet. As for the bullet itself," continued the boy, taking it from his pocket, "I shall keep it to give to my father."

"And you can roll it in the certificate that I shall write for you. And now, my boy, go."

Charles went out. Pichegru glanced at citizen Fenouillot, who was still sitting in his place, went to the doors that gave access to the dining-room, bolted them, and then returned to his place opposite his guest, who had watched his movements with the utmost astonishment.

"There," said he, "now we are alone, citizen."

"Alone, general?" asked the commercial traveller.

"Let us play above-board."

"I ask nothing better."

"Your name is not Fenouillot, you are not related to the lawyer at Besançon, you were not the Prince de Condé's prisoner, you are his agent."

"That is true, general."

"And you remained by his order to make me some proposals from the royalists at the risk of being shot."

"That is also true."

"But you said to yourself, 'General Pichegru is brave and he will understand that it requires a certain degree of courage to do what I am doing; perhaps he will not shoot me, though he may refuse; and then he will send me back to the prince with his refusal.'"

"That is also true; but I hope that after having heard me—"

"After having heard you there is just one case in which I shall have you shot; of that I warn you."

"What is that?"

"If you should put a price on my treason."

"Or your devotion."

"We will not discuss the words, but the thing. Are you disposed to answer all my questions?"

"I am, general."

"I am going to cross-examine you, I warn you."

"Go on."

Pichegru drew his pistols from his belt and laid one on either side of his plate.

"General," said the pretended clerk, laughing, "I hope those are not your cards that you are laying on the table."

"Have the goodness to put my pistols on the mantel-shelf, since you are nearer to it than I am," replied Pichegru, "they are not comfortable in my belt." And he pushed his pistols within the other's reach, who carried them to the mantel-shelf and returned to his seat.

Pichegru bowed slightly and the other did the same.

"Now," said Pichegru, "let us begin."

"I am waiting."

"What is your name?"

"Fauche-Borel."

"Where do you come from?"

"Neuchâtel. Only my name might have been Fenouillot, and I might have come from Besançon, since I belong to a Franche-Comté family which did not leave until after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes."

"In that case I should have recognized you for a fellow-countryman by the accent."

"Excuse me, general, but how did you know that I was not a commercial traveller for champagne?"

"By the way you opened the bottles. Citizen, another time choose another character."

"What one, for instance?"

"A bookseller."

"You know me, then?"

"I have heard of you."

"In what way?"

"As an uncompromising enemy of the Republic, and the author of royalist pamphlets. Excuse me if I continue to question you."

"Continue, general; I am at your service."

"How did you become an agent for the Prince de Condé."

"My name first attracted the attention of the Regent^[3] in a royalist pamphlet of M. d'Antraques, entitled 'Memoirs of the Regency of Louis Stanislas Xavier, son of France, uncle of the King, and Regent of France.' He noticed it a second time

when I induced the inhabitants of Neuchâtel to sign the Act of Union."

A title which Louis XVIII. bore while Louis XVII. lived.

"And I know that from that time your house became the resort of the emigrants and the hotbed of the anti-revolutionists."

"The Prince de Condé knew it also and sent a certain Montgaillard to know if I would join him."

"Do you know that Montgaillard is an intriguer?" asked Pichegru.

"I fear so," replied Fauche-Borel.

"He serves the king under two names—Roques and Pinard."

"You are well informed, general; but M. de Montgaillard and I have nothing in common except that we both serve the same prince."

"Let us return to him then. You were just saying that he sent M. de Montgaillard to know if you would join him."

"Yes; he told me that the prince had his headquarters at Dawendorff, and would receive me with pleasure. I started at once. I went first to Weissembourg, to throw your spies off the scent by making them think that I was going to Bavaria. I then went down toward Haguenau, and from there I reached Dawendorff."

"How many days have you been here?"

"Two."

"And how did the prince broach the subject to you?"

"In the simplest manner possible, the Chevalier de Contyre presented me to him. 'M. de Fauche-Borel,' he said. The prince rose and came toward me.—You wish me to repeat his exact words, do you not, general?"

"Yes."

"My dear Monsieur Fauche,' he said to me, 'I know you through all my companions in arms, who have told me over and over of your hospitality to them. I have therefore wished for some time to see you, and to offer you a mission that would be as advantageous as it is honorable. I have recognized for a long time that I cannot depend on foreigners. The reinstatement of our family upon the throne is not an end but a pretext; foreigners are foreigners, and will do everything for their own interests and nothing for the interests of France. No, it is from within that we must bring about the restoration; and,' he continued, laying his hand upon my arm, 'I have chosen you to carry the king's message to General Pichegru. The Convention, in ordering the union of the armies of the Rhine and the Moselle, have placed him under Hoche. He will be furious at this. Profit by this moment to persuade him to serve the cause of the monarchy, by making him understand that the Republic is nothing but a chimera.'"

Pichegru listened to all this with the greatest calmness, and when it was finished, he smiled. Fauche-Borel had expected some kind of answer, and had purposely introduced this mention of Hoche at the end; but as we have seen, Pichegru only replied to this part of the speech by his most benevolent smile.

"Go on," he said.

Fauche-Borel continued:

"It was in vain that I told the prince how unworthy I felt myself of this honor; and that I had no other ambition than to serve him as an active and zealous man. He only shook his head and said: 'M. Fauche, you or no one.' And putting his hand upon my heart, he added: 'You have there what will make the best sort of diplomat for this mission.' If I had not been a royalist I would have resisted, and would in all probability have found excellent reasons for my refusal. But being a royalist, I was desirous of serving the royal cause in any way whatsoever, and so I yielded. I have told you how I went to Weissembourg, from there to Haguenau, and from there to Dawendorff; I had only to go from there to Auenheim, your headquarters; but this morning your advance-guard was signalled. 'Pichegru spares us the trouble of going to him,' said the prince. 'It is a good omen.' Then it was agreed that if you were defeated I was to go to you, and you know the destiny which the Convention reserves for its defeated generals. If you were victorious, I was to wait for you, and with the help of the little scheme of which you already know, I was to gain access to you. You have conquered, and have discovered the ruse; I am at your mercy, general, and shall only offer one excuse for my conduct—my profound conviction that I acted for the best interests of France, and my intense desire to spare the shedding of blood. I await with confidence the decision of your justice."

Fauche-Borel rose, bowed, and seated himself again, as calm, at least to all appearances, as if he had just proposed a toast at a patriotic banquet.



CHAPTER XXVII

PICHEGRU'S REPLY

"Monsieur," said Pichegru, using the old form of address, which had been abolished in France for a year, "if you were a spy I would have you shot; if you were an ordinary recruiting officer who staked his life for gain, I would send you to the revolutionary tribunal, and you would be guillotined. You are a man in whom confidence has been reposed, and I believe that you have acted more from sympathy than principle. I will reply to you seriously, and I will send you back to the prince with my answer.

"I belong to the people, but my birth in no wise influences my political opinions, they are due entirely to my historical studies.

"Nations are great organized bodies, subject to human disease. Sometimes it is emaciation, and then tonics are necessary; sometimes it is plethora, and then bleeding is prescribed. You tell me that the Republic is a chimera. I agree with you that it is now. And that is where your error comes in. We are not yet a Republic; we are in the midst of a revolution. For a hundred and fifty years kings have ruined us; for three hundred years nobles have oppressed us; for nine centuries priests have held us in slavery. The time has come when the burden has grown too heavy for the backs which bear it, and '89 has proclaimed the Rights of Man, reduced the clergy to the rank of other subjects of the kingdom, and abolished every kind of privilege.

"There remained the king, whose rights had not been touched. He was asked: 'Will you accept France as we shall remodel it, with its three orders—the people, clergy, and nobility—each depending on the other; will you accept the constitution with the privileges which it accords you, the revenues it grants you, the duties it imposes on you? Reflect carefully. If you refuse, say No, and abdicate; if you accept, say Yes, and take the oath.'

"The king said Yes, and took the oath.

"The next day he left Paris; and so confident was he that all due precautions had been taken and that he could reach the frontier in safety, that he sent this message to the representatives of the nation, who had received his oath on the previous evening:

"I have been compelled to take the oath; it was made with the lips and not the heart; I hold my duties in abeyance, and resume my rights and privileges; and I will return with the enemy to punish you for your revolt."

"You forget, general," said Fauche-Borel, "that those whom you call the enemy were his own family."

"Well," said Pichegru, "that is just the trouble. The king's family were the enemies of France. But how could it be otherwise? Half of the blood that flowed in the veins of Louis XVI., son of Louis XV. and a princess of Saxony, was not even French blood; he married an archduchess, and we have for the royal armorial bearings, the first and third quarters of Lorraine, the second of Austria, and the fourth only of France. The result is as you have said. When Louis XVI. quarrels with his people he appeals to his family; but as the family is the enemy of France, he appeals to the enemy, and as the enemy enters France at the summons of the king, he commits the crime of high treason against the nation—a crime as great as high treason against the king, if, indeed, it is not greater.

"Then a terrible state of affairs results. While the king prays for the success of the arms of his family—which means the disgrace of France—and while the queen, seeing the Prussians at Verdun, counts the days that it will take them to reach Paris, France, beside herself with hate and patriotism, rises as one man and recognizes that she has enemies on the frontier—Austrians and Prussians; enemies in her very capital—the king and the queen; secret enemies—nobles and aristocrats. She defeats the Prussians at Valmy, the Austrians at Jemmappes; she stabs her aristocrats in Paris, and beheads both king and queen on the Place de la Révolution. By means of this terrible convulsion she believes that she is saved, and breathes freely.

"But she is mistaken; for the family that made war under the pretext of replacing Louis XVI. on the throne, continues to make war under pretext of crowning Louis XVII., but in reality that France may be invaded and dismembered. Spain wishes to regain Roussillon; Austria wants Alsace and the Franche-Comté; Prussia the Margraviates of Anspach and Beyreuth. The nobles form three divisions; one attacks us on the Rhine, another on the Loire, and a third conspires. War within, war without! Foreign war and civil war! On the frontier thousands of men lying on the battlefields; in France itself thousands of men massacred in prison, thousands of men dragged to the guillotine. Why? Because the king, after

taking the oath, did not keep it, and instead of trusting to his people, to France, threw himself into the arms of his family, the enemy."

"But then you approve of the massacres of September?"

"I deplore them. But what can you do against a people?"

"You approve of the king's death?"

"I regard it as a terrible thing; but the king should have kept his oath."

"Do you approve of political executions?"

"I think them abominable; but the king should not have called in the enemy."

"Oh! you may say what you like, general; the year '93 is a fatal one."

"For royalty, yes; for France, no."

"But aside from civil and foreign wars, aside from all these massacres and executions, it is nothing short of bankruptcy to issue all those thousands of francs in paper money."

"I should be glad to see the country bankrupt."

"So should I, if royalty could have the credit of restoring her credit."

"Credit will be re-established by the division of property."

"How so?"

"Have you not seen that all the lands belonging to the emigrated nobles, and to the Church, have been confiscated by the Convention; and that it has been decreed that they shall belong to the nation?"

"Yes; but what of that?"

"Have you not perceived that they have issued another decree to the effect that these lands can be bought with paper money at par value?"

"Yes."

"Well, my dear sir, there you have it! With a thousand francs in paper money—which is not enough to buy ten pounds of bread from the baker—the poor man can purchase an acre of land, which he can cultivate himself, and with which he can furnish bread for himself and his family."

"Who will dare to buy stolen property?"

"Confiscated; which is by no means the same thing."

"What difference? No one would take upon himself to become the accomplice of the Revolution."

"Do you know how much has been sold this year?"

"No."

"More than a thousand million francs' worth. Next year double that amount will be sold."

"Next year! But do you think that the Republic will last till next year?"

"The Revolution—"

"Well, the Revolution—why, Vergniaud says that the Revolution is like Saturn, and that it eats all its children."

"It has a great many children, and some of them are hard to digest."

"But you see that the Girondins are already devoured."

"The Cordeliers are left."

"Some day the Jacobins will devour them at a gulp."

"Then the Jacobins will be left."

"Good! but they have no men like Danton, and Camille Desmoulins, to make a formidable party."

"They have men like Robespierre and Saint-Just, and they are the only party that are in the right."

"And after them?"

"After them I see no one else, and I fear much that with them the Revolution must end."

"And in the meantime, think of the rivers of blood that will flow."

"Revolutions are ever thirsty."

"But these men are tigers."

"In a revolution I do not fear tigers as much as I do foxes."

"And you will consent to serve them?"

"Yes, because they will still be the ruling power of France. A Sylla or a Marius does not exhaust a nation; a Caligula or a Nero enervates it."

"Then in your opinion each of the parties that you have named will rise and fall in turn."

"If the genius of France is logical, it will be so."

"Explain yourself."

"Every party that comes into power will accomplish great things, for which it will be rewarded by the gratitude of our children; it will also commit great crimes, for which its contemporaries will punish its members; and that which has happened to the Girondins will happen to all the others. The Girondins brought about the death of the king—mind I do not say royalty—and they were in turn destroyed by the Cordeliers; the Cordeliers destroyed the Girondins, and they will in all probability be destroyed in turn by the Jacobins; and the Jacobins, the last outgrowth of the Revolution, will in turn be destroyed. By whom? I have already told you that I do not know. When they have disappeared, come and see me, M. Fauche-Borel, for then bloodshed will have ceased."

"And then, where shall we be?"

"We will probably be ashamed of ourselves! Now, I can serve a government that I hate, but I never could serve one that I despised; my motto is that of Thrasesas: *Non sibi deesse* (Never be wanting to one's self)."

"And your reply?"

"It is this: The present moment would be ill-chosen to attempt to stay the Revolution. Just now it is proving its strength by beheading five hundred persons a day at Nantes, Toulon, Lyons and Paris. We must wait until lassitude ensues."

"And then?"

"And then," continued Pichegru, gravely, "as it would be deplorable if France wearied of action, should be exhausted by reaction, and as I have no more confidence in the tolerance of the Bourbons than in that of the people, on the day when I take the first step toward bringing back one or the other member of that family, I shall have in my pocket a charter like that of England, or a constitution like that of America, which shall guarantee the rights of the people, and define the duties of the sovereign; this will be an essential condition. I should like to be a Monk, but a Monk of the eighteenth century, a Monk of '93, preparing for the presidency of a Washington, and not for the royalty of Charles II."

"Monk made his own conditions, general," said Fauche-Borel.

"I should be content to make conditions for France."

"Well, general, his Highness has forestalled you, and here is a paper which will, I am sure, far exceed anything that you could impose for the welfare of France."

Pichegru, who, like most Franks-Comtois, was a smoker, had filled his pipe toward the close of these remarks, and this important operation was just concluded when Fauche-Borel handed him the prince's paper.

"But," said Pichegru, laughing, "I thought that I had made you understand that, if I accepted at all, it would not be for two or three years."

"Very well; but that does not prevent you from considering the contents of this paper," replied Fauche-Borel.

"Very well," replied Pichegru, "when that time comes we will consider it." And without seeking to know what was in

the paper, without even unfolding it, he put it in the stove, and lighted his pipe with it, letting it burn until it was entirely consumed.

Fauche-Borel, thinking at first that the act resulted from absent-mindedness, made a movement to catch his arm, then, seeing that it was intentional, he drew back and let the paper burn.

Just then the gallop of a horse entering the courtyard made both men turn their heads. It was Macdonald who had returned, and his reeking horse showed that he had an important communication to make.

Pichegru, who had bolted the door, hastened to unfasten it; for he did not wish to be found closeted with the supposed clerk, whose real name and mission might be discovered later. The door opened almost immediately, and Macdonald appeared upon the threshold. His cheeks, which were naturally ruddy, had taken a deeper hue, for they had been exposed to the north wind and a fine rain.

"General," said he, "the advance guard of the Army of the Moselle is at Pfaffenheim; the entire army is following, and I have preceded General Hoche and his staff by a few minutes only."

"Ah!" said Pichegru, with an expression of frank satisfaction. "You have given me good news, Macdonald. I predicted that we should capture the lines of Weissembourg in eight days, but I was mistaken. With a general like Hoche, and men like those who compose the Army of the Moselle, we shall take them in four."

He had scarcely finished when Hoche and his staff rode rapidly into the courtyard, which was at once filled by horses, men, plumes, and floating scarfs. The old building shook to its foundations; it was as if a wave of life, youth, courage, patriotism, and honor had suddenly surged around its walls. In an instant all the riders had dismounted and thrown back their cloaks.

"General," said Fauche-Borel, "perhaps it would be well for me to retire."

"No, on the contrary, you had better remain," said Pichegru; "then you will be able to tell the Prince de Condé that the motto of the Republican generals is really *Fraternity*."

Pichegru placed himself opposite the door to receive the man whom the government had sent as his superior officer; Macdonald and Fauche-Borel stood a little behind him to his right and left.

The young officers mounted the stairs with careless good-humored laughter; but when Hoche, who preceded the others, opened the door and they saw Pichegru, they were silent. Hoche removed his hat, and the others followed his example; they entered the room with uncovered heads, and formed a circle around it.

Then, approaching Pichegru with a low bow, Hoche said: "General, the Convention has erred; it has named me, a soldier of twenty-five, as General-in-Chief of the armies of the Rhine and the Moselle, forgetting that one of the greatest soldiers of the age commands the Army of the Rhine. I have come to rectify this mistake, general, by putting myself under your orders and begging you to teach me the rude and difficult art of war. I have instinct, but you have science; I am only twenty-five years old, you are thirty-three; you are Miltiades, I am scarcely Themistocles; the laurels upon which you repose would disturb my rest: I therefore ask only to share your bed." Then, turning to his officers, who stood with bent heads, hat in hand, he said: "Citizens, here is your General-in-Chief; in the name of the safety of the Republic and the glory of France, I ask you, and, if necessary, I command you, to obey him as I myself shall obey him."

Pichegru listened with a smile, while Hoche continued: "I have not come to take from you the glory of reconquering the lines of Weissembourg—a work which you began so well yesterday; your plan is probably already made, and I shall adopt it, being only too happy to serve under you in this glorious work as your aide-de-camp." Then, holding out his hands toward Pichegru, he added: "In all things relating to war I swear obedience to my senior, my superior, my model, the illustrious General Pichegru. It is your turn, citizens!"

With one accord Hoche's entire staff raised their hands and took the oath.

"Your hand, general," said Hoche.

"Come to my arms," said Pichegru.

Hoche threw himself into Pichegru's arms, who pressed him to his heart. Then turning to Fauche-Borel, while his arm still rested around his young colleague's neck, Pichegru said: "Tell the prince what you have seen, citizen, and inform him that we shall attack him to-morrow morning at seven o'clock. These little civilities are not amiss between compatriots."

Fauche-Borel saluted.

"The last of your compatriots, citizen," he said, "died with that Thrascas whose motto you quoted just now. You are the true Romans of old Rome."

And he went out.



CHAPTER XXVIII

THE DRUM-HEAD MARRIAGE

That same day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the two generals were bending over a large map of the department of the Lower Rhine. Charles sat writing at a little distance from them, dressed in a becoming coat of dark blue, with pale blue facings and collar, and wearing the red cap of the staff secretaries. This cap was what he had found in the package referred to by the general.

The two generals had just decided that the following day, the 21st of December, the troops should pass over the curved line which divides Dawendorff from the heights of Reichsoffen, Froeschwiller and Woerth, where the Prussians were intrenched; these heights once carried, communication with Weissembourg would be cut off, and Haguenau, thus isolated, would be compelled to surrender. The army was to march in three columns, two to attack in front, and the third, traversing the woods and uniting with the artillery, to attack the Prussians on the flank.

As fast as they arrived at each decision, Charles wrote them down and Pichegru signed them; then the division commanders, who were waiting in another room, were called, and each departed to rejoin his regiment, and to hold himself in readiness to execute the order he had just received.

While they were thus engaged, word was brought to Hoche that the battalion of the rear-guard, having been unable to find quarters in the village, refused to bivouac in the fields, and showed signs of insubordination. Hoche asked the number of the battalion, and learned that it was the third.

"Very well," he said, "go and tell the third battalion for me that it will not have the honor of sharing in the first attack," and he calmly continued to issue his orders.

A quarter of an hour later four soldiers from the mutinous battalion entered, and, in the name of their comrades, asked the general's pardon, and requested permission for the battalion, which was about to bivouac on the spot indicated, to march first against the enemy.

"That cannot be," said Pichegru; "the battalion of the Indre deserves a reward, and they are to march first, but you shall be second."

The last orders had just been issued when an organ-grinder began to play the first strains of the "Marseillaise," "Allons enfants de la patrie," beneath the general's window.

Hoche paid no attention to the serenade, but Pichegru, at the first notes of the organ, listened attentively, then went to the window and opened it. An organ-grinder was persistently turning the handle of a box which he carried in front of him; but as darkness had set in, he could not distinguish the man's features. On the other hand, as the courtyard was full of persons going and coming, Pichegru probably did not care to run the risk of exchanging a word with him. He therefore drew back, and closed the window, although the tune still went on. But, turning to his young secretary, he said: "Charles, run down to the organ-grinder. Say 'Spartacus' to him, and if he replies 'Kosciusko' bring him up here. If he makes no reply, I have made a mistake, and you can leave him where he is."

Charles rose and went out without asking any questions.

The organ continued to play the "Marseillaise" perseveringly and Pichegru listened attentively. Hoche looked at Pichegru, expecting some explanation of this mystery. Then the organ stopped suddenly in the midst of a measure.

Pichegru nodded smilingly to Hoche. A moment later the door opened, and Charles entered, followed by the organ-grinder. Pichegru looked at him for a moment without speaking; he did not recognize the man.

The person whom Charles had brought into the room was a little below medium height and wore the Alsatian peasant's costume. His long black hair hung straight down over his forehead, and he wore a broad-brimmed hat. He looked about forty-five years old.

"My friend," said Pichegru to the musician, "I think this child has made a mistake, and that I have no business with you."

"General, there can be no mistake in a watchword, and if you have any business with Stephan Moinjski, here he is." With these words he raised his hat, threw back his hair, and drew himself up to his full height; and, save for the hair and the black beard, Pichegru saw before him the same man with whom he had talked at Auenheim.

"Well, Stephan?" asked the general.

"Well, general," replied the spy, "I know nearly all that you bade me find out."

"Then put aside your organ and come here. Listen, Hoche; this is some information in regard to the enemy. I am afraid," he added, turning to Stephan, "that you have not taken enough time to make your search very thorough."

"I do not know about Woerth, because an inhabitant of that town has agreed to give us information about it when we arrive at Froeschwiler; but I can tell you all you want to know about Froeschwiler and Reichsoffen."

"Go on."

"The enemy have abandoned Reichsoffen, in order to concentrate upon Froeschwiler and Woerth. Having learned that the junction of your two armies has been effected, they have concentrated upon those two points, which they intend to defend to the utmost. These two positions, which have excellent natural fortifications, have been covered with fresh works; intrenchments have been dug and bastions and redoubts have been erected. The enemy, both at the bridge of Reichsoffen, which they intend to defend as well, and on the heights of Froeschwiler and Woerth, number about twenty-two thousand men, and have thirty pieces of artillery, five of which have been detached for use at the bridge. And now," continued Stephan, "as your first attack will probably be made at Froeschwiler, here is a plan of the ground occupied by the enemy. The force under the command of the Prince de Condé occupies the village. I have no grudge against these men, for they are French. Once master of the heights, you command the city, and consequently it is yours. As for Woerth, I promise nothing as yet; but I may say I hope to show you how to take it without a struggle."

The two generals examined the plan, which was made with the accuracy of a skilled engineer.

"Upon my word, general," said Hoche, "you are fortunate in having spies who are capable of becoming officers of merit."

"My dear Hoche," said Pichegru, "this citizen is a Pole; he is not a spy, he is revenging himself." Then, turning to Stephan, he said: "Thanks! you have kept your word, and amply; but your work is only half accomplished. Will you engage to find us two guides who know their way so thoroughly that they could not lose it, even on the darkest night? You will walk near one of them, and you will kill him on the first sign of hesitation on his part; I will walk near the other. As you probably have no pistols, here are two." And the general gave a couple of pistols to Stephan, who received them with mingled pride and joy.

"I will find guides to be depended upon," he said, with his customary laconism. "How much time can you give me?"

"Half an hour; three-quarters at the outside."

The pretended musician shouldered his organ, and turned toward the door; but before he reached it, Faraud, the Parisian, slipped his head through the opening.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, general; upon the word of a sergeant, I thought you were alone," he said. "But I will go out again, and knock gently, as they used to do in the days of the old tyrant, if you wish."

"No," replied Pichegru; "since you are here, never mind; come in." Then, turning to General Hoche, he said: "General, let me present one of my braves to you. He is afraid of wolves, it is true, but not of Prussians; he took two of them prisoners this morning, and it was for that that I had those stripes put on his sleeve."

"Heavens!" said Faraud. "More generals! I shall have two witnesses instead of one."

"May I remind you, Faraud," said Pichegru, in that kindly tone he adopted toward his soldiers when he was in a good humor, "that this is the second time that I have had the pleasure of seeing you to-day?"

"Yes, general," replied Faraud; "days of happiness do come sometimes, and days of ill-luck at others; there are times when one simply can't help turning trumps."

"I suppose," said Pichegru, laughing, "that you did not come here merely to talk transcendental philosophy."

"General, I came to ask you to be my witness."

"Your witness!" exclaimed Pichegru. "Are you going to fight a duel?"

"Worse than that, general; I am going to be married."

"Good! And to whom?"

"The Goddess of Reason."

"You are in luck, you rascal," said Pichegru; "she is the prettiest and the best girl in the army. How did it happen? Come, tell us all about it."

"Oh! it is very simple, general. I do not need to tell you that I am a Parisian, do I?"

"No, I know it."

"Well, the Goddess of Reason comes from Paris, too. We are from the same *quartier*. I loved her, and she did not repulse me when the procession of the 'Country in Danger' passed with its black flags and its rolling drums. Then citizen Danton came to our faubourg, saying, 'To arms! The enemy is only four days' march from Paris.' I was a carpenter's apprentice, but all this upset me. The enemy only four days' march from Paris! The country in danger! 'Faraud,' I said, 'you must repulse the enemy, you must save the country.' I threw away my plane, caught up my gun, and went off to enlist under the flag of our municipality. The same day I went to the Goddess of Reason, and told her that, as her sweet eyes had driven me to desperation, I was going to be a soldier in order to get finished off quickly; then Rose said to me—her name is Rose Charleroi—well, then, Rose Charleroi, the same as used to take in fine washing, said to me: 'As truly as there is but one God, whom they are going to dethrone also, from what I hear, if my poor mother were not sick, I should enlist also!'

"Ah! Rose," said I, 'women do not enlist'

"Yes, they do," she replied, 'as vivandières.'

"Rose," I answered, 'I will write you once a fortnight, to let you know where I am; and if you enlist, enlist in my regiment.'

"Agreed!" she said.

"We clasped hands, embraced each other, and away went Faraud. After Jemmapes, where my regiment was cut to pieces, they put us with the volunteers of the Indre and brought us up the Rhine. Whom did I see six or eight weeks ago but Rose Charleroi! Her poor mother was dead, and she had been chosen as the best and most beautiful girl of the *quartier* to be the Goddess of Reason in some celebration or other, and after that, upon my word, she kept her promise to me, and descended from her pedestal to enlist. I attempted to embrace her. 'Idle, lazy fellow,' she said to me, 'not even a corporal?'

"What would you have, Goddess? I said to her; 'I am not ambitious.'

"Well, I am ambitious," she said; 'don't come near me until you are a sergeant, unless it be to get something to drink.'

"On the day that I am a sergeant will you marry me?" I asked.

"I swear it on the flag of the regiment."

"She has kept her word, general. We are to be married in ten minutes."

"Where?"

"In the courtyard, under your windows, general."

"And who is to marry you?"

"The drummer of the regiment."

"What, a drum-head marriage?"

"Yes, general; Rose wants everything to be regular."

"Excellent," said Pichegru, laughing. "I recognize the Goddess of Reason there! Tell her that, since she has asked me to be her witness, I will give her a dowry."

"A dowry, general?"

"Yes, a donkey with two barrels of brandy."

"Oh! general, it is your fault that I don't dare ask anything else of you."

"Tell me what it is, anyway."

"Well, it is for my comrades rather than myself. The day ought to end as it began, with a ball."

"Well," said Hoche, "as the second witness, I will pay for the ball."

"And the town-hall will do for a ballroom," said Pichegru. "But you must tell them all that the ball must finish at two o'clock in the morning, as we are to march at half-past two; we have twelve miles to go before daybreak. You are warned; those who wish to sleep may sleep, and those who wish to dance may dance. We will witness the marriage from the balcony; when all is ready we will know it by the rolling of the drums."

Intoxicated with all these promises, Faraud hastened downstairs, and soon the buzz of preparations could be heard in the courtyard. The two generals, once more alone, definitively arranged the plans for the following day.

One column, which was to start at once, under the orders of Colonel René Savary, was to make a forced march, so as to reach the village of Neuwiller, back of Froeschwiller, about noon. On hearing the first firing they were to march upon Froeschwiller, and attack the Prussians in the rear. A second column, under Macdonald, was to cross the Zeuzel at Niederbronn. The two generals were to march with this column. The third was to make a demonstration at the bridge of Reichsoffen, and endeavor to carry it. If it was impregnable, the column was merely to keep the enemy busy while the other two columns turned the enemy's position. This third column was to be under command of Abatucci.

These arrangements were scarcely completed before the rolling of a drum informed the generals that they were needed to complete the wedding-party, and they lost no time in showing themselves upon the balcony.

As they came out, a tremendous cheer was raised; Faraud saluted in his own peculiar manner, and the Goddess of Reason became as red as a cherry. The whole staff surrounded the couple. It was the first time that this singular ceremony, which was afterward repeated so frequently during the three revolutionary wars, had taken place in the Army of the Rhine.

"Come!" said Faraud, "to your post, Spartacus."

The drummer, thus adjured by Faraud, got upon a table, before which the bride and groom placed themselves.

There was a long rolling of the drum; then Spartacus cried in a loud voice, so that no one present might lose a word of what was said: "Listen to the law! Whereas, it is not always possible in the field to find an official with stamped paper and floating scarf to open the doors of Hymen, I, Pierre-Antoine Bichonneau, called Spartacus, head drummer of the battalion of the Indre, proceed lawfully to unite in marriage Pierre-Claude Faraud and Rose Charleroi, vivandière of the twenty-fourth regiment."

Spartacus here interrupted himself by rolling his drum, which was imitated by all the drummers of the battalion of the Indre and the twenty-fourth regiment.

Then, when the sound had ceased, he said: "Draw near, you who are to be united in matrimony."

The couple came a step nearer to the table.

"In the presence of the citizen-generals Lazare Hoche and Charles Pichegru, the battalion of the Indre, the twenty-fourth regiment, and any one else who happens to be present in the courtyard of the town-hall, in the name of the Republic, one and indivisible, I unite you and I bless you!"

Spartacus executed another roll of the drum, while two sergeants of the battalion of the Indre held a banner, intended to do duty as a canopy, over the heads of the bride and groom; after which Spartacus resumed: "Citizen Pierre-Claude Faraud, you promise your wife protection and love, do you not?"

"The deuce!" said Faraud.

"Citizeness Rose Charleroi, you promise your husband constancy, fidelity, and a little mouthful to drink now and then, do you not?"

"Yes," replied Rose Charleroi.

"In the name of the law, you are married! The regiment will adopt your numerous offspring. Wait now; don't go away!"

A rolling of twenty-five drums was heard, which ceased suddenly at a sign from Spartacus. "Without that you would not have been happy," he said.

The two generals applauded laughingly, and nothing was heard in the courtyard except cheers and hurrahs, which

gradually gave place to the clinking of glasses.



CHAPTER XXIX

THE PRUSSIAN ARTILLERY FOR SIX HUNDRED FRANCS

At six o'clock the next morning, while the sun was disputing with a thick fog the right to light the world; while the first column, commanded by Savary, which had left Dawendorff the night before at nine o'clock, was entering Jaegerthal, where it was to rest for five or six hours: while the thunder of the cannon was beginning to be heard at the bridge of Reichsoffen, which was the object of the attack of the column commanded by Abatucci—the second column, the strongest of the three, with Hoche and Pichegru at its head, crossed the stream which flows past Niederbronn, and took possession of the village without striking a blow.

They had marched twelve miles, and the troops were allowed a short rest at this, their first halting-place. They breakfasted, and the Goddess of Reason, with her donkey and her kegs of brandy, passed through the ranks. One of the kegs was left behind there, and with the cry of "Long live the Republic!" the column started at eight o'clock for Froeschwiller, scarcely two miles away.

Meanwhile the unceasing roar of the cannon could be heard in the direction of Reichsoffen. After a quarter of an hour the firing ceased suddenly. Had the passage been forced, or had Abatucci been obliged to retreat?

The general called Doumerc.

"Have you a good horse, captain?" he asked.

"Excellent."

"Can he take ditches and fences?"

"He can take anything."

"Gallop off then to the bridge of Reichsoffen, and bring me news or die in the attempt."

Doumerc rode off; ten minutes later two horsemen were seen rapidly approaching from the direction that Doumerc had taken. They were the captain and Falou.

The captain had ridden but half of the way when he met a chasseur, who had been despatched by Abatucci to announce that he had carried the bridge and was about to march upon Froeschwiller. Falou having taken a Prussian officer prisoner, Abatucci had made him a corporal—a nomination he begged the general to confirm.

Falou returned to Abatucci with his nomination confirmed, and carried a verbal order to march upon Froeschwiller, and threaten the town, while the general attacked the heights. He was also to hold himself in readiness to render any assistance that might be needed. The troops had meantime continued their march and the heights of Froeschwiller were coming into view.

A small wood covered the road between Niederbronn and Froeschwiller, and fearing lest it might conceal an ambuscade the general ordered a sergeant and twenty men to form in skirmishing line and to investigate it.

"Oh!" said Doumerc, "it is not worth while to trouble the men for a little thing like that." And he went through the wood at a gallop, saying, as he returned, "There is no one there, general."

They passed through the wood safely, but as the advance-guard arrived at the edge of a brook it was greeted by a volley. Two or three sharpshooters had been stationed along the windings of the stream and in the numerous thickets. The two generals formed their men to attack. Pichegru ordered Charles to remain in the rear, but at his earnest solicitation he was allowed to accompany the staff.

Froeschwiller lies at the foot of a little hill which was then bristling with cannon and redoubts; on the right they could see Abatucci's force driving before them into the town the men who had attempted to defend the bridge.

"Comrades," said Pichegru, "shall we wait for our companions, who have already had their share of glory at the bridge, before attacking these redoubts, or shall we keep for ourselves alone the glory of the undertaking, which will be a difficult one, I warn you!"

"Forward! Forward!" shouted with one accord the battalion of the Indre, which formed the head of the column.

"Forward!" cried the men of Hoche's division, who had threatened insubordination the night before, and who had

subsequently obtained permission to march second in the line.

"Forward!" cried General Dubois, who was in command of the rear-guard of the Army of the Moselle, which now formed the advance-guard, owing to the reverse movement which had been made.

The drums and trumpets beat the charge. The front ranks began to sing the "Marseillaise"; the quick-step of three or four thousand men shook the earth, and like a human cyclone the army advanced with levelled bayonets.

They had scarcely gone a hundred feet before the little hill vomited fire like a volcano, and bloody furrows were plowed through the thick ranks, which were closed as rapidly as they were broken. The "Marseillaise" and the cries of "Forward!" continued, and the distance between the first ranks of the French soldiers and the intrenchments was rapidly lessening, when a second volley burst forth, and again the balls plowed their way through the ranks. They closed again, but this time a dogged rage succeeded to the enthusiasm, and the song grew fainter, the steps slower.

As the first rank reached the intrenchment, a third discharge burst from the hostile guns; this time the artillery, loaded with grape-shot, sent a hurricane of lead through the attacking column. The assailants fell back before that fiery blast. This time Death did not mow in long swaths, but fell as hail among the wheat. The song ceased, the music was hushed, the wave of humanity not only stopped but flowed backward.

Again the troops took up the music of the victorious hymn. General Dubois, commanding the attack, had his horse killed under him, and was believed to be dead; but he extricated himself from beneath the animal, rose, and putting his hat on the point of his sword, cried, "Long live the Republic!"

This cry was repeated by all the survivors, and even by those of the wounded who were able to make their voices heard. The momentary hesitation vanished; the charge sounded again. The bayonets were levelled, and a roaring as of lions succeeded the singing and the shouts. The first ranks had already reached the redoubts. The grenadiers had begun to scale the walls, when thirty pieces of cannon belched flame with a noise like that of an explosion in a powder-mill.

This time General Dubois fell to rise no more. A ball had cut him in two. The first ranks disappeared in the whirlwind of fire as if engulfed in an abyss. This time the column not only wavered but fell back, and a space of forty feet, piled with the dead and wounded, was cleared.

Then a heroic deed was done. Before Pichegru, who had sent two of his aides-de-camp to Abatucci to come to their assistance, could guess his purpose, Hoche, throwing his hat on the ground that he might the better be recognized by all, with his sword in hand, dashed at a gallop into the clearing and shouted: "Soldiers! six hundred francs apiece for the Prussian cannon!"

"Taken!" cried the soldiers with one voice.

The music, which had been silent for a second, began again, and, amid shot and crashing balls, which did deadly work with their hail-like rain, Hoche, followed by his men, mad with hate and revenge, reached the first redoubt, climbed over it, and urged his horse into the midst of the enemy.

Pichegru placed his hand on Charles's shoulder. The boy was watching the terrible spectacle with wide-opened eyes and quickened breath.

"Charles," said he, "did you ever see a demigod?"

"No, general," replied the boy.

"Well, then," said Pichegru, "look at Hoche. Not even Achilles, son of Thetis, was grander or more beautiful."

And in truth, Hoche, surrounded by his enemies, his hair floating in the wind of death, his brow pale, his lip disdainful, with his tall figure and his beautiful face, looked like an ideal hero, at once dealing death and scorning it.

How would the men climb behind him? how would they scale those parapets eight or ten feet high? It would be impossible to describe how it was done, but in less than five minutes Hoche was followed by his men, the redoubt was carried, and the corpses of one hundred and fifty men were lying at his feet. Then Hoche sprang upon the redoubt, and counting the cannon, said: "Four cannon awarded, for two thousand four hundred francs, to the first ranks of the attacking column!"

Thus he stood for a moment, a living flag of the Revolution before the whole army, a target for bullets, none of which touched him. Then, in a terrible voice, he shouted: "At the others! Long live the Republic!"

And in the midst of rolling drums, the blare of trumpets, generals, officers and soldiers rushed pell-mell upon the intrenchments. At the first sound of the trumpets, the royalists, who were in readiness, rushed from their camp; but they were received by Abatucci's advance-guard, which came up at the double-quick, and kept them so busily engaged that they were unable to assist their allies, the Prussians. Abatucci, in obedience to Pichegru's orders, had even detached fifteen hundred men, which he sent with the two aides-de-camp to join the main army.

Pichegru took command of them, and seeing that Abatucci was fully able to take care of himself with his remaining men, he hastened to the assistance of his comrades, who were hard-pressed at the redoubts. These fresh troops, animated by their victory at the first charge, penetrated the battery. The gunners were cut down, and such guns as could not be turned upon the Prussians were spiked.

The two generals met in the midst of the fray, and standing upon the summit of a low hill, from which they could see the whole plain of Neschwiller, joined in a shout of triumph. A black mass of shining weapons, tri-colored plumes, and flags bending like the masts of a ship in a tempest, were advancing at the double; it was Macdonald and the first column, who thus arrived, not in time to decide the victory, for that was already gained, but to share in the glory.

At sight of them the Prussians became panic-stricken and thought only of flight. They flung themselves over the parapets of the redoubts, and rolled, rather than ran, down a slope so steep that it had not been thought necessary to fortify it. But Macdonald by a prompt manœuvre had skirted the hill, and received the soldiers at the point of the bayonet.

The royalists, who alone had not fled, on seeing their comrades, knew that the day was lost. The infantry retreated slowly, covered by the cavalry, whose bold and frequent charges won the admiration even of those who were fighting against them.

Pichegru, under pretext that they were wearied, sent word to their conquerors to allow them to retreat slowly, while, on the contrary, the cavalry was to charge the fleeing Prussians, who did not rally until they had passed Woerth.

Then each of the generals, hastening to the top of the low hill to view the battlefield, met at the summit. They threw themselves into each other's arms, and waving, the one his bloody sword, the other his hat pierced by two bullets, looked like two gigantic statues through the smoke which still mounted to the sky like the expiring flame of an extinguished volcano.

A tremendous cry of "Long live the Republic!" resounded across the battlefield at this sight, until it gradually died away, and was merged in the groans of the wounded and the last sighs of the dying.

CHAPTER XXX

THE ORGAN

It was noon and the victory was complete. The conquered Prussians abandoned the battlefield covered with dead and wounded, twenty-four ammunition wagons, and eighteen cannon.

The cannon were dragged before the two generals, and their captors were paid for them at the price set upon them at the beginning of the conflict—six hundred francs apiece.

The battalion of the Indre had taken two. The soldiers were exhausted, first from their night's march, and then from the three long hours of fighting. The generals decided that while one battalion took possession of Froeschwiller, the others should halt and breakfast upon the battlefield.

The trumpets sounded and the drums beat a halt. Arms were stacked. The French relighted the Prussian fires, some of which were not wholly extinguished. When they left Dawendorff they had all received their full rations, and as they had in addition their back pay for five months, each one had added a sausage, a roast fowl, a smoked tongue or a leg of ham to the regular fare. All had full canteens.

If one chanced to be less well provisioned, and had only dry bread, he opened a dead comrade's knapsack and found all he wanted.

In the meantime the surgeons were going over the field; those who could stand the transportation were sent to Froeschwiller to await attention there, the others were looked after at once. The generals established themselves in the redoubts previously occupied by General Hodge half way up the hill. The Goddess of Reason, now the citizeness Faraud, in her quality of first canteen-bearer of the Army of the Rhine, and having no rival in the Army of the Moselle, had assumed charge of the generals' repast. A few chairs, knives and forks and glasses were discovered; they had hoped to find all other necessaries in the general's wagon, but a stray ball had shattered the caisson and all that it contained. The table was set with all the necessary dishes, but all kinds of food and drink were conspicuous by their absence.

Pichegru was about to ask tithes of his soldiers, when a voice, which seemed to come from the bowels of the earth, cried: "Victory! Victory!"

It was Faraud, who had discovered a trap-door, a staircase, and a cellar containing a well-furnished pantry.

Ten minutes later the generals and their staff were dining at the same table. No words could describe these fraternal love-feasts, where soldiers, officers and generals broke the bread of the bivouac together. These men who were to conquer the world, and had started at the Bastille as Cæsar's soldiers had started at the Golden Mile, began to feel in themselves the supreme confidence which gives victory. They did not know whither they were to go, but they were ready to go anywhere. They had before them the whole world, and behind them France—the land which is more solicitous than all others, the only one which lives, breathes, and loves her children, which has a heart, which trembles with pleasure beneath their feet when they triumph, with sadness when they are vanquished, and with gratitude when they die for her.

Oh! he only knows her, this Cornelia among nations, he only can cherish her pride, who can place on her head a laurel-crown, and in her hand the sword of Charlemagne, of Philippe-Auguste, of François I., or of Napoleon—he alone knows what milk can be drawn from her bosom, what tears from her eyes, what blood from her heart!

In this genesis of the nineteenth century, with the mire of the eighteenth still clinging to its feet while its head was in the clouds—in these first battles, when a single people, in the name of liberty and the happiness of the human race, threw down the gauntlet to the whole civilized world—there was something grand, Homeric, sublime, which I feel myself powerless to describe, and yet for the purpose of describing which I have undertaken this book. It is not the least of the poet's misfortunes to feel grandeur, and yet, breathless, stifled, discontented with himself, to fall far short of that which he feels. With the exception of the five hundred men who had been sent to occupy Froeschwiller, the remainder of the army, as we have seen, bivouacked upon the field of battle, rejoicing over their victory, and already forgetful of the price it had cost them. The cavalry, which had been sent in pursuit of the Prussians, now returned with twelve hundred prisoners and six pieces of artillery. Their story was as follows:

A short distance beyond Woerth, the second carabineers, the third hussars and the thirtieth chasseurs had attacked a large force of Prussians surrounding one of Abatucci's regiments, which, having lost its way, had found itself in the midst of the enemy. Attacked on all sides by a force ten times superior to them, the men formed a square and fired a volley of

musketry which had attracted the attention of their comrades.

The three regiments did not hold back; they burst through the terrible wall of fire which encircled their comrades; and the latter, realizing that help was at hand, formed in column and fell upon the enemy with terrible energy. Cavalry and infantry then began their retreat toward the French army, but an overwhelming force issued from Woerth and intercepted them. The battle began anew, and, as the French were contending with four times their number, they might have had to yield, had not a regiment of dragoons cut a way through the flames for the infantry, thus setting it free. The infantry in turn, being once more able to open a regular fire, soon cleared a space around it. The cavalry enlarged this space; then horse and foot dashed forward, cutting and slashing, and, singing the "Marseillaise," made sure their position, and were thus able to return to the French army without even losing their guns, amid cries of "Long live the Republic!"

The generals mounted and rode into the town to prepare for its defence should the Prussians attack it. They also wished to visit the hospitals.

All the peasants in the neighborhood, and workmen from Froeschwiller, about seven or eight hundred, were requisitioned to bury the dead. They immediately began to dig immense trenches in the plain, in which they placed French and Prussian soldiers, regardless of their nationality. Prussians and French, in the morning living enemies, became reconciled in the sleep of death at nightfall.

The town was too small to lodge all the army; but with the intelligence and rapidity of French soldiers a temporary village arose as if by magic upon the plain, over which shot and shell had whistled in the morning, while the rest of the army occupied the intrenchments thrown up by the Prussians. The two generals took up their quarters in the great redoubt, sheltered by the same tent.

It was about five o'clock in the evening. The officers were seated at dinner with Pichegru between Charles, who had that day for the first time witnessed the terrors of war and was in consequence extraordinarily thoughtful, and Doumerc, who was on the contrary extremely loquacious. Suddenly Pichegru, thinking he caught a distant sound, which might be a signal, hurriedly placed one hand on Doumerc's arm, and the other on his own lips to command silence. Every one obeyed.

Then from the distance came a far-off echo of the strains of the "Marseillaise." Pichegru smiled and looked at Hoche.

"All right, gentlemen," he said. "Doumerc, you may go on." And Doumerc continued his narration.

Only two persons understood the meaning of this interruption and caught the sound of the organ.

Five minutes later, the sounds still approaching, Pichegru went to the flap of his tent and stepped out upon the covered platform which gave entrance to it. The organ came nearer; the musician was evidently climbing the hill. The general soon saw him approaching by the light of the fires on the great redoubt. But the sentinel's challenge stopped him when he was not more than twenty feet from the door. As the musician had not the countersign he began to play the "Marseillaise" again; and at the first notes the general's voice called from the top of the embankment: "Let him pass."

The sentinel recognized the general as he leaned over the parapet, and drew back obediently. Five minutes later the general and the spy were face to face.

Pichegru signed to Stephan to follow him, and the spy, seeing that he had been recognized, stopped playing. Then Pichegru led him to the cellar where General Hodge's stores had been found, and where Leblanc had placed a table and pen, paper and ink. Leblanc was then put on guard at the door, with orders to allow no one to pass save General Hoche and citizen Charles.

Six o'clock struck in the village. Stephan listened and counted the strokes.

"Good!" he said, "we have twelve hours of darkness before us."

"Can we do anything to-night?" asked Pichegru, eagerly.

"Please God," replied Stephan, "we will take Woerth."

"Stephan," exclaimed Pichegru, "if you keep your word what shall I give you?"

"Your hand," replied Stephan.

"There it is," replied Pichegru, seizing the other's hand, and shaking it heartily. Then, motioning to him to sit down, he continued: "And now, what must we do?"

Stephan placed his organ in a corner, but still remained standing.

"I shall need ten wagons of straw and ten of hay in less than two hours."

"Nothing easier," replied Pichegru.

"Sixty daring men, ready to risk everything, of whom at least half speak German."

"I have a battalion of Alsatian volunteers."

"Thirty Prussian uniforms."

"We can get them from the prisoners."

"And three thousand men under command of a capable general, who must leave here at ten o'clock, and, passing by way of Enashausen, must be within a hundred feet of the Haguenau gate at midnight."

"I will command them myself."

"The first corps must remain silent and motionless until they hear the word 'Fire' and see a great light, then they must hasten into the town, to which they will find the gate open."

"Very well," said Pichegru, "I understand. But how are you going to make the gates of a fortified city open to your ten wagons of straw at this time of night?"

Stephan drew a paper from his pocket.

"Here is the order," he said.

And he showed Pichegru an order to the citizen Bauer, landlord of the Golden Lion, to deliver within twenty-four hours ten wagons of straw and ten of hay, for the use of the chasseurs of Hohenlohe.

"You have an answer for everything," laughed Pichegru; then, calling Leblanc, he said: "Give your best supper to citizen Stephan, and tell General Hoche and Charles to come here."

CHAPTER XXXI

IN WHICH THE ORGAN-GRINDER'S PLAN BEGINS TO DEVELOP

About eight o'clock that same evening, twenty wagons, loaded alternately with hay and straw, left Froeschwiller by the road to Enashaussen. Each one was driven by a man who, in accordance with the old saying that French was intended to be spoken to men, Italian to women, and German to horses, addressed his horses in a language marked by the strange oaths that Schiller put in the mouths of his Robbers.

Once beyond Froeschwiller the wagons went silently along the highroad leading to the village of Enashaussen, which bends straight back, by an angle, to Woerth. They stopped in the village only long enough for the drivers to take a drink at the door of the wine-shop, and then continued on their way.

When they were within a hundred feet of the town the first wagoner stopped his cart and went on alone to the gate. He was challenged by a sentinel before he had gone ten paces, to whom he replied: "I am bringing some wagons that have been ordered and am on my way to report."

The first sentinel let him pass, as did the second and the third. At the gate he slipped his paper through the wicket and waited. The wicket closed again, and in a moment the little side door opened and the sergeant in charge appeared.

"Is it you, my boy?" he asked; "where are your wagons?"

"About a hundred feet off, sergeant."

It is needless to add that both question and answer were in German.

"Very well," said the sergeant, still in German, "I will bring them in myself." And he went out, charging the man he left behind to be careful.

The sergeant and the wagoner passed the three lines of sentinels and reached the wagons which were waiting on the highroad. The sergeant glanced at them carelessly and ordered them to proceed. Wagons and wagoners started, and, led by the sergeant, passed the sentinels and entered the gate which closed behind them.

"Now," said the sergeant, "do you know the way to the barracks or shall I go with you?"

"No need of that," replied the chief wagoner; "we will take the wagons to the Golden Lion to-night in order to save trouble, and in the morning we will take the forage to the barracks."

"Very well," said the sergeant, re-entering the guard-house; "good-night, comrades."

"Good-night," replied the wagoner.

The Golden Lion was scarcely a hundred feet from the gate by which they had just entered. The chief wagoner rapped upon the glass, and as it was only ten o'clock the landlord appeared upon the threshold.

"Ah! is it you, Stephan?" he asked, glancing at the long line of wagons, which extended from his door almost to the Haguenau gate.

"Yes, Monsieur Bauer, myself," replied the chief wagoner.

"And all goes well?"

"Perfectly."

"No trouble in entering?"

"Not the slightest. And here?"

"We are ready."

"The house?"

"A match is all that is needed."

"Then we had better bring the carts into the courtyard. Our men must be stifling."

Fortunately the courtyard was large, and the twenty carts had no difficulty in entering. The great gate was closed, and the

landlord and the wagoner were alone. Then, at a given signal—three claps of the hand—a singular thing came to pass.

The bales of hay or straw in each wagon began to move. Then two heads appeared, followed by two bodies, and finally two men, dressed in the Prussian uniform, emerged. Then from each of the carts they took another uniform, which they gave the wagoners. Then, to crown the work, each soldier, standing in the wagon, armed himself with a musket, and took out a third for the wagoner. Thus, when nine o'clock sounded, Stephan, clad as a Prussian sergeant, had under his orders the sixty resolute German-speaking men for whom he had asked Pichegru. They went directly to the stable, where the door was shut after them when they had received the order to load their muskets, which had been left unloaded for fear of accidents in the wagons.

Then Bauer and Stephan went out arm in arm. They went to the house to which the latter had referred when they met; it stood in the highest part of the town, as far as possible from the Haguenau gate, and not a hundred feet from the powder-magazine. The house, which resembled a Swiss chalet, was built entirely of wood. Bauer showed Stephan a room filled with combustible matter and resinous wood.

"At what time shall I fire the house?" asked Bauer, as simply as if he had been speaking of the most trivial matter.

"At half-past eleven," replied Stephan.

It was then nearly ten.

"Are you sure that the general will be on hand at half-past eleven?"

"In person."

"You know," said Bauer, "that once the Prussians realize that the burning house is near the powder-magazine, they will rush here to save the powder, and the inclosure in which the military wagons are stored. In the meantime the Rue de Haguenau will be empty, and that is the time to carry the gate and enter the town. The general can reach the great square without firing, and at the first report five hundred patriots will open their windows and begin to shoot at the Prussians."

"Have you men to sound the tocsin?"

"Two in each church."

"Then all is ready," said Stephan. "Let us take a look at the powder-magazine, and then go back."

They returned by the ramparts, and found that, as Bauer had said, the wooden house was within fifty feet of the inclosure. At eleven o'clock they entered the courtyard of the Golden Lion. The sixty men were ready and full of enthusiasm, and understood that they had been intrusted with a great enterprise.

At a quarter past eleven Bauer shook hands with Stephan, and, assuring himself that he was provided with his tinder-box and flint, made his way toward the wooden house.

Stephan, who remained behind, called his sixty men and explained his plan to them. Each understood what he had to do, and swore to carry it out as far as possible. They waited. Half-past eleven struck. Stephan, at the highest window in the house, was watching for the first gleam of light. Scarcely had the strokes ceased to vibrate in the air than a reddish glare began to color the roofs in the upper part of the town. Stephan ran down; the time had come.

The men were drawn up in the yard in three platoons of twenty men each. Stephan half opened the gate. Every one was running to the other part of town. He ordered his men to march toward the Haguenau gate in single file, while he himself ran ahead, crying: "Fire! in the higher parts of the town, comrades! Fire! near the powder-magazine! Fire! save the wagons! Fire! keep the powder from exploding!"

Stephan ran to the guard of twenty-four men at the gate. The sentinel, taking him for the sergeant of the post, did not stop him.

"Every one of you to the upper part of the town to save the wagons and the powder. To the fire! to the fire!"

Not one of the twenty-four men remained, save the sentinel, chained by his orders. But his curiosity got the better of his discipline, and he asked the pretended sergeant what had happened. The latter, full of good-will toward his subordinates, told him that a servant had fired the wooden house belonging to the landlord of the Golden Lion. In the meantime the patrol was approaching from behind.

"What is that?" asked the sentinel.

"Oh, nothing," replied Stephan, "a patrol." And so saying he slipped a gag into the sentinel's mouth and pushed him toward the first two men of the patrol, who bound him firmly.

Then they carried him into the guard-house, locked him in the officer's room, and took out the key. One of the men volunteered to replace the sentinel, and as they were obliged to know the countersign Stephan undertook to find out what it was.

Holding the key in one hand and a sharp dagger in the other he entered the room. No one knew what arguments he used, but when he came out the sentinel had spoken in spite of his gag. He told the sentinel that the words for the day were Stettin and Strasbourg.

Then they seized the gate-keeper, bound him and locked him in the cellar, Stephan again taking the keys.

Then he put fifty-five of his men in the gatekeeper's room, bidding them hold the gate at all odds so long as one of them was alive. Finally he went out with his five men to relieve the outside sentinels.

In ten minutes two of them were dead and the third a prisoner. Their places were taken by three of his men. Then with the other two he hastened toward Enashaussen; but scarcely had he gone a hundred yards when he came upon a black, compact mass, which proved to be Pichegru's men. He was soon face to face with the general.

"Well?" asked the latter.

"Not an instant to lose, general; we must hurry."

"The Haguenau gate?"

"Is ours."

"Come, children," said Pichegru, who realized that this was no time for lengthy explanations, "Forward! march!"

CHAPTER XXXII

THE TOAST

They obeyed with the joyful eagerness which is born of hope, taking with them the sentinels who had been stationed along the walls. Just as they reached the third they heard rapid firing from the gate where Stephan had left his men.

"Hurry, general," said he, "our men are attacked!"

The column advanced at a quick-step. The gate opened and the portcullis was raised as they came in sight. Though attacked by a force thrice as great as their own, the Republicans had held their ground; the gate was still theirs. The column dashed through the gate and down the street like a wild-boar which sweeps everything before him, while Stephan's men—who were a target, with their Prussian uniforms, for the men of Pichegru's command, who did not know of his little ruse—kept close to the wall.

They marched on with levelled bayonets, the small force of Prussians who had attacked the gate fleeing before them. Hoping to be relieved, they sent orderlies before them to give the alarm that the French were masters of the Hagenau gate. Shots echoed throughout the town, thanks to Bauer and his men, who were firing from the windows.

Pichegru was able to appreciate the panic better when he reached the principal square. The Prussians were running hither and thither, not knowing which way to turn. He ranged his men in order of battle, while a thousand men were sent to the upper town, where most of the Prussians had hurried. The fight raged in twenty different directions. The Prussians did not attempt to rally to a centre; the attack had been so sudden, and they were confused by the conflagration, the firing, and the ringing of the tocsin. Although the force commanded by Pichegru and Macdonald was no greater than that of their adversaries, the struggle was not as prolonged as if the advantages had not all been with the French.

At midnight the Prussians had retired from the town, but Pichegru was not assured of their final retreat until two in the morning. He stationed soldiers everywhere, ordered the gates guarded with the utmost vigilance, and bade the soldiers bivouac in the streets. All the townsfolk kept open house, contributing in some way to the welfare of the soldiers, to celebrate the event. Fires were lighted in the streets, and meat was cooked upon the immense spits in vogue during the latter century. Then a procession was arranged like the ones that hail the approach of carnival times in the northern cities. The streets were illuminated, the Prussian uniforms worn by Stephan's men were given to the people to be burned in effigy, and every citizen took a soldier by the arm and invited him to the fraternal banquet.

Pichegru took care not to oppose this patriotic outburst. He knew well, for his intelligence was exceptionally acute, that the real strength of France lay in consolidating the people and the army until they became one body animated by one soul. Only, fearing that the enemy might attempt some surprise, he gave orders to redouble the sentinels, and, to permit each to share in the celebration, he reduced the time of duty from two hours to one.

There were some twenty aristocrats in Woerth who illuminated their houses even more gayly than the others, fearing, doubtless, that they would be accused of coldness toward the government and that the day of reprisals would follow closely. Their fears were groundless, for all that they had to endure was the *auto-da-fé* of the Prussian uniforms, and they were invited to participate in the celebrations at the *auto-da-fé* tables which were spread in front of their houses. This they did gladly, only too willing to escape thus easily.

Pichegru had remained in the public square with a thousand men ready to give assistance if it were needed, and later to receive orders. Seeing that the order to bivouac in the streets had served as a pretext for general merry-making, he had encouraged it, and, leaving Macdonald to command in his place, he went with Stephan toward the upper part of the town.

About three o'clock in the morning Pichegru went back to the inn, for Bauer had asked as a favor that he be allowed to lodge the general. The finest apartments in the inn had been prepared, and while Pichegru was walking about the town the staircase had been decorated with flags, wreaths, and ornamental pieces. In the dining-room a table with twenty-five covers had been laid, and the windows and doors decorated with greens and flowers, for the general and his staff.

Pichegru, as we have seen at Arbois, was perfectly indifferent to triumphal demonstrations, but this time he looked upon it as a Republican love-feast.

The general was accompanied by all the high dignitaries of the town who had been the first to yield to him. At the door, as Stephan was preparing to slip away unnoticed, he caught him by the arm.

"Stephan," said he, "I have always believed in the proverb that short reckonings make long friends. Now I have a double reckoning to settle with you."

"Oh! that can be done easily, general. Will you grant me two requests?" said Stephan.

"With pleasure."

"First I ask for an invitation to supper."

"For yourself?"

"Oh! general, you know that I am only a spy."

"In the eyes of the world; but in mine—"

"I am myself in your eyes, and that satisfies me; let me be what I seem to the world. I care nothing for what it thinks of me, but only for my revenge."

"All right; and the second request?"

"Is that you will give a toast."

"To whom?"

"You will see when you give it."

"But in order to make it—"

"Here it is all written out."

Pichegru was about to read it, but Stephan stopped him.

"Read it when you give the toast," he said.

Pichegru put the paper in his pocket. "And whom shall I invite?"

"A great citizen—Prosper Bauer."

"The landlord of the inn?"

"Yes."

"What has he done that is so fine?"

"You will see when you read the toast."

"Will you always be so mysterious?"

"My power lies in mystery."

"You know that we attack to-morrow."

"Do you need any information about their position?"

"You must be tired."

"I am never tired."

"Do what you please; anything you do will be well done, unless you are caught."

"When can I bring you my report?"

"Any time. If you are never tired, I at least never sleep."

"Au revoir, general."

"Au revoir."

Then turning to the group that had stood aside while he was talking with Stephan, he looked vainly around for the landlord of the Golden Lion.

"Charles," he said, "have the goodness to find our host, citizen Bauer, and ask him for me to sup with us. Take no refusal, and accept no excuse."

Charles bowed and went in search of Prosper Bauer.

Pichegru went upstairs and the rest of the staff followed him. He placed the mayor on his right, the deputy-mayor at his left, and left the seat opposite him for the landlord of the Golden Lion. At length Charles appeared, almost dragging the embarrassed innkeeper after him.

"General," he said, "I come, not at your invitation, of which I am not worthy, but at your command."

"Very well, citizen," said Pichegru, pointing to the empty chair, "sit down there, and after supper we will settle that."

The supper was a merry one, and they drank to victory and deliverance together. There is a strong hatred between the Alsatians and the Prussians, and during the two months that the Prussians had occupied the lines of Weissembourg the Alsatians had had cause to hate them still more. This time they hoped to be rid of them altogether. But they were to see them twenty-five years later, when the insatiable Prussian eagle, having devoured a third of the white eagle of Poland, was to tear away one of the heads of the Austrian eagle.

Toward the end of the supper the general remembered his promise to Stephan. He rose, took his glass in one hand and the paper in the other. Everybody followed his example, and, in the midst of profound silence, he read:

"To the great patriot and citizen, Prosper Bauer, who conceived the plan which restored the town of Woerth to France; who risked his life by receiving and sheltering the sixty men in Prussian uniform who carried the Haguenau gate; who was the first to give the signal to five hundred patriots to fire from the windows upon the enemy; and who, finally, in order to keep the Prussians in the higher part of the town and to create a diversion from the attack upon the gate, set fire to his house with his own hand. To the man who in one day risked his life and sacrificed his fortune."

Here the applause forced Pichegru to stop. But as he made a sign that he wished to continue, silence fell again.

"It was by this light, kindled by the purest patriotism and the most filial devotion, that the foreigners read upon our victorious flags, 'Hatred to tyrants! Nationality for the people! Liberty of the world!' All honor to the great patriot and citizen, Bauer!"

And then, amid cheers and applause, Pichegru embraced him in the name of France. Three days later the capture of Woerth was announced in the "Moniteur," and Pichegru's toast was repeated in full. It was the sole reward that the brave Bauer would consent to receive.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE ORDER OF THE DAY

However much we may desire not to lose ourselves in accounts of sieges and battles, we must now follow Hoche and Pichegru in their triumphal course. A chapter or two, however, will suffice to bring us to the time when the enemy was driven beyond the frontiers of France—at least, as far as Alsace and Lorraine are concerned. Moreover, as will be seen, after the three battles of Dawendorff, Froeschwiller, and Woerth, the enemy withdrew from France.

At four o'clock in the morning Stephan came to tell Pichegru that the Prussians, amazed at the way they had been driven from Woerth, were retreating across the Vosges in two columns, one going toward Drakenbroenn, and the other toward Lembach.

Pichegru at once sent an aide-de-camp to inform Hoche that the town was in his hands and that they would attack on the next day, or rather on that very day at five in the morning. He intended to form his army into three columns to attack in the front, and he directed Hoche to leave the intrenchments, and, marching upon Groersdorff, to attack them on the rear. The retreat of the Prussians rendered this manoeuvre unnecessary. Doumerc was awakened, and, springing upon his horse, he hastened to tell Hoche to pursue the enemy, while Pichegru fell back upon Haguenau and occupied the town.

But when Pichegru, at the head of his column, reached the heights of Spachbach, he met a messenger whom the mayor of Haguenau had despatched, who informed him that on learning of the triple victory he had just won, and which completely shut off the town from any communication with the armies of Hodge and Wurmser, the garrison of Haguenau had evacuated the place during the night, had marched through the woods to Souffelnheim, and had crossed the Rhine as far up as Fort Vauban. Pichegru detached a thousand men under command of Liebler, and sent them to occupy Haguenau; then, retracing his steps, he took the road through Woerth, passed on to Pruschdorff, and slept that same night at Lobsam.

Stephan was directed to inform Hoche of this unexpected return, and to ask him to join with Pichegru in making still greater efforts to recapture the lines of Weissembourg.

The road reminded one of the invasions of the Huns, Vandals and Burgundians, when huge concourses of men swept from land to land. The Austrians, obliged to abandon the line of the Moder, fell back upon the lines of Weissembourg, before the Lauter, where they intended to give battle. They were under General Wurmser's command.

The Prussians, under command of Hodge, fell back upon Sauerbach. They crossed the river at Lembach, and effected a junction with the Austrians at Weissembourg.

But what seemed so strange in this retreat was that the army was followed by a swarm of royalists, consisting of Alsatian nobles, who, together with their families, accompanied the troops and shared their flight. The roads were filled with carriages, horses and wagons, all in confusion, through the midst of which the Republicans forced a passage, seemingly unconscious that they were mingling with a hostile population, which, when left behind, seemed to be following the very army from which it was in reality fleeing.

The two French generals effected a junction at Roth, and as they met, the soldiers shouted: "Long live the Republic!" The ranks opened, and the two representatives, Saint-Just and Lebas, appeared. It had occurred to them that, as the enemy might be in greater force at Weissembourg, their presence would be encouraging to the soldiers. Charles was the first to recognize the deputy from the Aisne, and cried: "Ah! there is citizen Saint-Just!"

Pichegru leaned toward him and said laughingly, "Do not tell him about the foraging-cap."

"Oh! indeed, no!" replied Charles, "ever since he told me that he had had his best friend shot I have distrusted him."

"You are right to do so."

Saint-Just came up to Pichegru and congratulated him in a few brief and trenchant words. Then, recognizing Charles, he said: "Ah! it seems that between the toga and arms you have chosen arms. Don't let him get killed, citizen Pichegru; he is a good boy, and bids fair to become a good man, a rare thing in these days." Then taking Pichegru aside, he said: "My police tell me—though I would not believe them—that you had an interview with an emissary from the Prince de Condé. I don't believe a word of it."

"It is true, nevertheless, citizen Saint-Just."

"What did he have to say?"

"He came to make me some treasonable propositions."

"What were they?"

"I do not know; my pipe had just gone out, so I lighted it again with the Prince de Condé's letter without taking the trouble to read it."

"And you had the messenger shot?"

"Indeed I did not."

"Why not?"

"If he had been dead, how could he tell his prince what I had done with his propositions?"

"Pichegru, you did not conceal some other motive beneath this clemency?"

"Yes, that of beating the enemy the next day at Froeschwiller; of taking Woerth the day following, and of forcing the lines to-day."

"Then you and Hoche are ready to march upon the enemy?"

"We are always ready, citizen representative, particularly when we are honored with your company."

"Then forward!" said Saint-Just; and he sent Lebas to direct Hoche to attack on his side. The drums and trumpets, sounded all along the line, and the army moved forward.

As chance would have it, that same day, the 22d of December, the Prussians and the Austrians had resolved to resume the offensive, and when the French army reached the top of a small eminence they found the enemy drawn up in line of battle from Weissembourg to the Rhine.

The position was a good one for offence but not for defence, for in the latter case the Lauter formed an abyss, and there was much danger of their being driven into it. When Pichegru and Hoche marched against them they found that the enemy was also on the march.

Supposing that the fiercest struggle would be in the centre, the generals massed thirty-five thousand men there, while three divisions of the Army of the Moselle threatened the right wing of the allies by the passes of the Vosges, and two divisions, commanded by one of General Broglie's aides-de-camp, advanced to the attack by way of Lauterbourg. The young aide-de-camp, whose name was Antoine Desaix, was scarcely twenty-seven years old.

Suddenly Saint-Just and Lebas, who were marching respectively in front of the columns of Pichegru and Hoche, called out: "Halt!"

They were not more than a cannon-shot from the enemy, and it was evident that the two armies would meet before another half hour.

"Citizen Pichegru," said Saint-Just, while Lebas said the same to Hoche, "call all your officers to the front; I have a communication to make to them before the battle begins."

Pichegru gave the necessary orders, which were repeated all along the line by brigadier-generals, colonels, aides-de-camp, and captains.

The officers of every rank, even to the sub-lieutenants, gathered around Saint-Just and Pichegru on the right, and Hoche and Lebas on the left. This took up about ten minutes, during which the officers alone moved while the soldiers stood quietly waiting.

The Prussians and Austrians advanced nearer, and the Republicans began to hear their trumpets and drums beating and sounding the charge. Saint-Just drew a printed sheet from his pocket; it was the "Moniteur."

"Citizens," he said in his harsh voice, which was so powerful that it could be heard five hundred feet away, "before you attack I should like to tell you a piece of good news."

"What is it? What is it?" cried all the officers together.

Just then one of the enemy's batteries opened fire, and its projectiles found their victims in the French ranks. One of the officers had his head carried off by a ball, and fell at Saint-Just's feet, who, apparently oblivious of the fact, continued in

the same tone: "The English are driven from Toulon, the infamous city. The tri-color flag floats over the ramparts. Here is the 'Moniteur,' which contains not only the official announcement, but also the details which I would read you if we were not under fire."

"Read them," said Pichegru.

"Read them, citizen representative of the people; read them!" cried all the officers.

The soldiers, in whose ranks the volley had plowed several furrows, looked impatiently at the group of officers. A second discharge was heard, and a second hurricane of fire whistled past. Other furrows were opened.

"Close the ranks," Pichegru cried to the soldiers.

"Close the ranks!" repeated the officers.

And the empty spaces disappeared.

In the middle of the circle a horse was lying dead beneath his rider. The officer disengaged his feet from the stirrups and drew nearer to Saint-Just in order to hear better.

Saint-Just read:

28th Frimaire of the Year II. of the Republic, one and indivisible;
eleven of the evening.

Citizen Dugommier to the National Convention:

CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVES—Toulon is ours: Yesterday we took Fort Mulgrave and the Little Gibraltar.

This morning the English evacuated the forts and burned the French fleet and the arsenal. The building where the masts were stored is on fire; twenty-six warships are burned, eleven of which are ships of the line, and six are frigates; fifteen are captured, and thirty-eight saved.

At ten o'clock this evening Colonel Cervoni entered the town. To-morrow I will write more fully. Long live the Republic!

"Long live the Republic!" cried the officers in turn.

"Long live the Republic!" repeated the centre and the right wing.

A third cannonade was heard and more than one shout of "Long live the Republic!" was begun and never finished.

"Now," continued Saint-Just, "here is a letter from our colleague Barras, who is charged with the punishment of Toulon; it is addressed to the National Convention:

CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVES—The greater part of the infamous inhabitants of Toulon have embarked on the ships of Hood and Sidney Smith, and consequently national justice cannot be administered as it ought to be. Fortunately they were unable to take their houses with them; the city remains to disappear beneath the vengeance of the Republic, like those accursed cities of antiquity, for which the eye searches in vain. At first it was thought best to destroy the city by blowing it up, but it would not do to risk firing the powder-magazines and the arsenal. It has therefore been decided that all the masons from the six neighboring departments shall be summoned hither with their tools, for a general and prompt demolition. With an army of twelve thousand masons the work will be accomplished speedily, and Toulon should be levelled to the ground within a fortnight.

To-morrow the shooting of the traitors will begin, and will be continued until no more traitors remain to be shot.

We salute you fraternally. Long live the Republic.

The enemy still continued to advance; the rolling of drums, the blare of the trumpets, and from time to time, when the wind was favorable, the harmonious tones of music could be heard in the distance. But every sound was soon lost in the roar of the cannon; a storm of shot, thick as hail, fell upon the French ranks, the body of officers being especially singled out. Pichegru rose in his stirrups, and noticing a slight movement among the soldiers, shouted: "To your ranks!"

"To your ranks!" repeated the officers.

The lines reformed.

"Ground arms!" cried Pichegru.

Ten thousand muskets touched the earth at the same moment with admirable precision.

"Now," continued Saint-Just, "here is a communication from the Minister of War; it is addressed to me to be transmitted to Generals Pichegru and Hoche:

CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVES—I have received this letter from citizen Dutheuil, junior. "Toulon is in the hands of the Republic; the cowardice and perfidy of its enemies is complete. The artillery has served splendidly; we owe the victory to it alone. There is not a soldier who has not been a hero; the officers set the men the example. I cannot find words to praise Colonel Bonaparte sufficiently. Great knowledge of military science, keen intelligence, too great a tendency to expose himself—these form a feeble summary of the rare virtues of this rare officer. It is for you, minister, to retain him for the glory of the Republic."

I have appointed Colonel Bonaparte a brigadier-general, and beg you to direct Generals Hoche and Pichegru to place his name upon the order of the day of the Army of the Rhine. I will show the like honor to the brave man whose name they send me, who shall have been the first to cross the lines at Weissembourg.

"You hear, citizens," said Pichegru, "Colonel Bonaparte's name is on the order of the day. Let each one return to his post and repeat this name to the soldiers. Now that the English are beaten, down with the Prussians and the Austrians! Forward! Long live the Republic!"

The name of Bonaparte, which had sprung so gloriously into prominence, ran from rank to rank; an immense shout of "Long live the Republic!" burst from forty thousand throats; the drums beat the charge, the trumpets sounded, the bands played the "Marseillaise," and the whole army, so long restrained, dashed upon the enemy.

CHAPTER XXXIV

A CHAPTER WHICH IS BUT ONE WITH THE FOLLOWING CHAPTER

The object of the campaign, to recapture the lines of Weissembourg, had been accomplished; the enemy had been driven from France in the North and in the South, at Toulon and at Landau, in the space of ten days. The soldiers were therefore enabled to enjoy a much needed rest; besides they had found stores of cloth, shoes, food and forage at Guermesheim, at Kaiserlauten, and at Landau; a single store at Kaiserlautern having supplied them with one thousand woollen comforters. The time had therefore come for Pichegru to keep his promises.

Estève's accounts had been rendered, and the twenty-five thousand francs, deposited to the credit of the battalion of the Indre with the general, had been increased by twelve hundred, the price of the two cannon which the battalion had captured. This sum of twenty-six thousand two hundred francs was enormous, for it was all in gold; and the gold louis at that time was worth seven hundred and twelve francs in paper money.

The general sent for Faraud and the two soldiers who had accompanied him each time that he had come as ambassador from the battalion. The three appeared, Faraud with his sergeant-major's stripes, and one of the others with corporal's stripes, which he had earned since his first interview with the general.

"Here I am, general," said Faraud; "and here are my two comrades, Corporal Groseiller and Comrade Vincent."

"You are all three welcome."

"You are very kind, general," said Faraud, with the twist of the neck which was peculiar to him.

"You know that a sum of twenty-five thousand francs has been allotted for the widows and orphans of the dead of the battalion of the Indre."

"Yes, general," replied Faraud.

"To which sum the battalion has added another twelve hundred francs."

"Yes, general. And by the same token, it was an idiot named Faraud who was carrying it in his handkerchief and who let it fall for sheer joy on hearing that he had been made a sergeant-major."

"Will you give me your word that he will not do it again?"

"Word of a sergeant-major! not even if you should make him a colonel."

"We have not got as far as that yet."

"So much the worse, general."

"But still I am going to promote you."

"Me?"

"Yes."

"Again?"

"I am going to make you paymaster."

"In place of citizen Estève?" said Faraud, with his peculiar twist of the head. "Thanks, general, the place is a good one."

"No, not quite that," said Pichegru, smiling at the fraternal familiarity which makes the strength of the army, and which the Revolution introduced into that of the Republic.

"Too bad," said Faraud.

"I appoint you paymaster in the department of the Indre to the extent of twenty-six thousand and two hundred francs. In other words, I charge you and your two comrades, whose conduct has given me satisfaction, to divide the sum among the families whose names you will find there." And the general gave Faraud a list.

"Ah! general," said Faraud, "that is indeed a reward! What a pity that they have done away with the good God!"

"Why so?"

"Because the prayers of these good folks would have taken us straight to heaven."

"Well," said Pichegru, "it is probable that when you are ready to go there, there will be a restoration. And now how will you go?"

"Where, general?"

"To the Indre. There are a good many departments to cross before you get there."

"On foot, general; that will take time, though."

"I wanted to hear you say that, brave hearts that you are! Here, this is the money for your expenses, nine hundred francs in all—three hundred for each of you."

"We could go to the end of the world with that."

"But you must not stop at every tavern for a drink."

"We shall stop nowhere."

"Nowhere?"

"No. I shall take the Goddess of Reason with me."

"Then we will have to add three hundred francs for the Goddess of Reason. Here is a draft on citizen Estève."

"Thanks, general; and when must we start?"

"As soon as possible."

"To-day?"

"Well, go, my brave fellows; but at the first shot—"

"You will find us at our posts, general."

"Good, and now go tell them to send citizen Falou to me."

"He will be here in five minutes."

The three messengers bowed and went out. Five minutes later, citizen Falou presented himself, wearing the general's sword at his side with great dignity.

Since the general had seen him his face had undergone a change. A gash, beginning at the ear and extending to his upper lip, had cut open his right cheek; the flesh was held in place by strips of plaster.

"Ah!" said Pichegru, "it looks as if your defence had come rather late."

"That's not it, general," replied Falou; "but they were three to my one; and before I had time to kill the other two, the third had given me this razor-cut. It's nothing; it would be healed already if we had had any wind. Unfortunately the weather is damp."

"Well, upon my honor, I am not sorry that it has happened to you."

"Thanks, general; a fine scar like that does not harm a chasseur's face."

"That was not what I meant."

"What then?"

"It will give me an excuse to send you away."

"Say, general, no jokes; it is not a final dismissal?"

"No, a fortnight's furlough."

"What for?"

"To go and see Mother Falou."

"Ah, yes, the poor old woman; that's so."

"Have you not your back-pay to carry her?"

"Ah! general, you have no idea of the quantity of brandy compresses that I had to put on this wound! It is like a mouth, it drinks and drinks, you have no idea how much."

"In other words your pay is almost gone?"

"Worse than my sword was when you were good enough to give me this one."

"Then I will do for your pay what I did for your sword."

"Will you give me more?"

"Oh! the Prince de Condé will pay the piper!"

"Gold! Ah, what a pity that the poor old mother cannot see it again; it would remind her of the times when there was plenty of gold!"

"She will see enough to sew the new quartermaster's stripes on your coat, which the Prussians have already sewed on your face."

"Quartermaster, general? Am I a quartermaster?"

"That is the rank which they have put upon your leave of absence."

"Faith, yes; there it is, every letter of it!" said Falou.

"Get ready to start."

"To-day?"

"To-day."

"On foot or on horseback?"

"In a carriage."

"In a carriage? Am I to go in a carriage?"

"A post-chaise."

"Like the king's dogs when they go to the hunt! And may I know why I am to have this honor?"

"My secretary, Charles, who is going to Besançon, will take you with him, and will bring you back again."

"General," said Falou, bringing his heels together and saluting, "it only remains for me to thank you."

Pichegru acknowledged the salute with a wave of his hand and a nod. Falou turned upon his heel and went out.

"Charles! Charles!" called Pichegru.

A door opened, and Charles, who was in an adjoining room, hurried in. "Here I am, general," he said.

"Do you know where Abatucci is?"

"With us, general. He is doing the account that you asked for."

"Will he have it finished before long?"

"It is finished, general," said Abatucci, appearing with the paper in his hand.

Charles was about to go away, but the general caught him by the wrist. "Wait," said he, "I wish to speak to you." Then he said to Abatucci, "How many flags?"

"Five, general."

"Cannons?"

"Twenty-eight."

"Prisoners?"

"Three thousand."

"How many of the enemy killed?"

"Fully seven thousand."

"How many did we lose?"

"Scarcely twenty-five hundred."

"You will go to Paris with the rank of colonel, which I shall ask the government to confirm. You will present the five flags to the Convention in the names of General Hoche and myself, and you will take with you the report that General Hoche is preparing. Estève will give you a thousand francs to cover your expenses. My choice of you to carry the captured flags to the Convention, as well as the rank I have just bestowed upon you, proves my esteem for your courage and ability. If you see your cousin Bonaparte remind him of the fact that I was his tutor at Brienne."

Abatucci pressed the hand which the general held out to him, saluted, and retired.

"And now we are by ourselves, little Charles!" said Pichegru.

CHAPTER XXXV

IN WHICH ABATUCCI FULFILS THE MISSION THAT HE HAS RECEIVED FROM HIS GENERAL, AND CHARLES THAT WHICH HE RECEIVED FROM GOD

Pichegru glanced around the room to make sure that they were alone, and then, lowering his voice, he said: "Charles, my dear child, you have made a sacred promise in the sight of heaven which you must keep. If there is in this world a promise which should be kept inviolate above all others, it is one that has been made to a dying man. I have told you that I would give you the means to fulfil it, and I now keep my word. You still have the count's foraging-cap?" Charles unbuttoned his coat and showed the general the cap.

"Good! I shall send you to Besançon with Falou. You will go with him to the little village of Boussières, and will give the burgomaster the money intended for his mother; and, as I do not wish that any one should think that this is pillage money, which they certainly would if her son gave it to her himself, I desire that the burgomaster shall hand it to her himself. A letter from me will moreover remain in the village, bearing witness to our new quartermaster's courage. I give you and Falou eight days' leave from the time you reach Besançon; you will doubtless want to show your new uniform."

"And will you give me nothing for my father?"

"A letter when you are ready to start."

Just then Leblanc announced that dinner was ready.

On entering the dining-room the general cast an anxious glance at the table; it was full, and more than full, Pichegru having invited Desaix to dine with him. The latter had brought with him one of his friends who was in Pichegru's army, and whom he had made his aide-de-camp, René Savary, the same who had written Faraud's certificate upon his corporal's stripes. The dinner was as lively as usual, all the officers of the staff being present; only two or three were wounded and those very slightly. After dinner they mounted their horses, and the general, with his entire staff, visited the outposts.

When they returned to the town, the general dismounted and told Charles to do the same; and, giving the two horses to the chasseur in attendance, he told Charles to accompany him to the streets where the shops were located.

"Charles, my boy," he said, "in addition to the official and secret missions with which you are charged, I should like to give you a special one. Will you accept it?"

"Gladly, general," said Charles, clinging to Pichegru's arm. "What is it?"

"I don't know yet. I have a friend at Besançon named Rose; she lives in the Rue Collombier, No. 7."

"Ah!" exclaimed Charles, "I know her, she is our family seamstress. She is a kind-hearted woman about thirty, who limps a little."

"Exactly," said Pichegru, smiling. "The other day she sent me six fine linen shirts which she had made herself. I should like to send her something in return."

"That is a good idea, general."

"But what shall I send? I do not know what would please her."

"Take the advice that the weather itself gives you—buy her a good umbrella. We will use it on the way home. Then I will tell her that you have used it, and it will be all the more precious to her."

"You are right; it will be most useful to her when she goes out. Poor Rose, she has no carriage. Let us go in here."

They were just opposite an umbrella-shop. Pichegru opened and shut ten or twelve, finally selecting a magnificent sky-blue one. He paid thirty-eight francs in paper money at par for it. This was the gift which the first general of the Republic sent to his best friend. The reader will readily understand that I should not have related this incident if it were not historic.

When they returned at night, Pichegru busied himself with his correspondence, telling Charles, who was to start the next day, to sleep well.

It was on this evening that the curious occurrence which I am about to relate took place. It was told to me by little Charles himself, after he had grown to be a man of forty-five, and had become a learned writer, with the great library he had wished for so many years before.

Charles, obeying Saint-Just's decree, threw himself upon his bed all dressed. Like all who wore the uniform, he customarily had a black cravat tied tight around his neck. It was like that which Pichegru himself wore, and which all the staff had adopted; in the first place, out of compliment to the general, and, secondly, in protest against Saint-Just's voluminous neckpieces. Charles, in order to copy the general more exactly, tied his in a little knot on the left side—a fashion which he continued to follow until his death.

Half an hour later, Pichegru, who was working, heard Charles moan. At first he paid no attention to it, thinking that the boy was dreaming; but as the groans became more pronounced, and changed to a rattling in the throat, Pichegru rose, went to the boy, whom he found lying face down, raised his head after slipping his hand under his neck, and untied the knot which was strangling him.

The boy awoke, and, recognizing Pichegru, who was bending over him, asked: "Is it you, general; do you need me?"

"No," replied the general, laughing, "it is you, on the contrary, who needed me. You were uneasy and groaned, and when I came to look at you I had no difficulty in finding what was the matter with you. Any one who wears a tight cravat like us must take care to loosen it a little before going to sleep. I will explain to you some other time how neglect of this precaution might cause apoplexy and sudden death. It is one method of suicide."

And we shall see that it was the one which Pichegru adopted later.

On the next day Abatucci started for Paris, Faraud and his two comrades for Châteauroux, and Charles and Falou for Besançon. A fortnight later Faraud sent word that distribution had been made throughout the Department of the Indre.

The general had already received a letter from Abatucci, written ten days after his departure, telling how he had presented the five flags to the President amid cries of "Long live the Republic!" from all the members of the Convention and the spectators, adding that the President had thereupon confirmed his rank.

Finally, on the fourth day after Charles's departure, before he heard from any one else, Pichegru received the following letter on the 14th Nivôse (3d of January):

MY DEAR GENERAL—The new calendar made me forget one thing, that, by reaching Besançon on the 31st of December, I should be able to wish all my family a happy New Year on the following day.

You, however, did not forget it, and my father feels grateful to you for your kindness and thanks you heartily.

On the 1st of January (old style), after we had wished one another a happy new year, and had embraced each other, Falou and I set out for the village of Boussières. There, as you had directed, we stopped the carriage at the burgomaster's house to whom your letter was addressed; he forthwith summoned the village drummer who announces all important news to the people. He directed him to read your letter over three times so that no mistake should be made, and then he sent him to beat his drum before old Mother Falou's door, who, at the first tap, came to the threshold leaning on her stick. Falou and I were only a few steps away.

As soon as the roll ceased the proclamation began. When she heard her son's name the poor old woman, who had not understood very well, began to cry, asking: "Is he dead? Is he dead?"

An oath, big enough to crack the sky, made her turn, and then, seeing the uniform dimly, she cried: "There he is! There he is!"

And then she fell into her son's arms, and he embraced her amid the applause of the whole village. Thereupon, as the proclamation, which had been interrupted by this little scene, had not been fully understood, it was begun all over again. As the drummer read the last sentence, the burgomaster, who wished to make his little sensation, came forward with a wreath in one hand and the purse in the other. He put the laurel-wreath on Falou's head and the purse in his mother's hand. I could not stay any longer, but I heard later that the village of Boussières had a celebration that day with illuminations, a ball, and fireworks, and that Falou went about among his fellow citizens with his laurel-wreath on his head, like Cæsar, until two o'clock in the morning.

As for me, general, I returned to Besançon to carry out the sad duty which you know about, and of which I will tell you the full particulars when I see you again.

Not until then did I find time to attend to your commission; but after that I hastened to the Rue Collombier, No. 7, and went up to the third floor. Rose recognized me and received me as a little friend; but when she knew that I came from her great friend, then I tell you, general, poor Rose could not say enough. She took me in her arms, kissed me, and wept over me.

"What! did he really think of me?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle Rose."

"Of his own accord?"

"I assure you that it is so."

"And did he choose this beautiful umbrella himself?"

"He himself."

"And he used it when he returned to the hotel?"

"Well, we both used it, but he held it."

Without another word she looked at the handle, kissed it and wept over it. I did not try to check her tears, but wept with her; they were tears of joy, and it would have pained her had I said: "Stop!" Then I told her how satisfied you were with the shirts she had sent you and that you would wear no others. This made her all the worse. Then how we did talk about you! She is going to write you herself and thank you, but she bade me say all sorts of kind things to you from her.

I must also say in regard to my father that you must have told him some pretty stories in regard to his son, for while he was reading he looked at me queerly, and I noticed that his eyes were wet. Like Mademoiselle Rose, he will write to you.

I fear that I have taken more of your time than I deserve; but you have made an important personage of me by intrusting me with three commissions, and so I hope you will pardon this chatter from your little friend.

CHARLES NODIER.

THE THIRTEENTH VENDÉMIAIRE



CHAPTER I

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Nearly two years have elapsed since the events recorded in our first volume. In order that our readers may clearly understand those which are to follow we must take a rapid bird's-eye view of the two terrible though inevitable years of 1794 and 1795.

As Vergniaud, and after him Pichegru, had prophesied, the Revolution had devoured her own children. Let us watch the terrible harpy at her work.

On the 5th of April, 1795, the Cordeliers were executed. Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Bazire, Chabot, Lacroix, Hérault de Sechelles, and the poet-martyr Fabre d'Eglantine, author of the most popular of our popular songs, "Il pleut, il pleut, bergère," died together on the same scaffold whither Robespierre, Saint-Just, Merlin (of Douai), Couthon, Collot d'Herbois, Fouché (of Nantes) and Vadier sent them.

Then came the Jacobins turn. Vadier, Tallien, Billaud and Fréron accused Robespierre of having usurped the dictatorship; and Robespierre, his jaw shattered by a pistol-ball, Saint-Just, with lofty countenance, Couthon, both of whose legs had been crushed, Lebas—in short their friends to the number of twenty-two—were executed on the day following the tumultuous one which is known in history as the fatal day of the 9th Thermidor.

On the 10th Thermidor the Revolution was still alive, because the Revolution was immortal, and no rise or fall of parties could kill it. The Revolution still lived, though the Republic was dead. With Robespierre and Saint-Just the Republic was beheaded. On the evening of their execution, the boys were shouting at the doors of the theatres, "Carriages? Who wants a carriage? Want a carriage, bourgeois?" On the next day and the day after that eighty-two Jacobins followed Robespierre, Saint-Just and their friends to the Place de la Revolution.

Pichegru, who was then commander-in-chief of the Army of the North, learned of this bloody reaction. He saw that the hour for blood had passed and the time for filth had come, with Vadier, Tallien, Billaud and Fréron. He sent privately to Mulheim, and Fauche-Borel, the prince's messenger, hastened to him.

Pichegru divined correctly that the ascending period of the Revolution was past. The reactionary or descending period had arrived; blood was still to be shed, but it was the blood of reprisals.

On the 17th of May the hall of the Jacobins—the cradle of the Revolution, the strength of the Republic—was finally closed by a decree. Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor, the colleague of the executioner's knife, who was no more guilty than it, since he simply obeyed the orders of the Revolutionary Tribunal as the knife obeyed his own—Fouquier-Tinville was executed, together with fifteen judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal. In order to make the reaction complete the execution took place on the Place de Grève. M. Guillotin's ingenious invention resumed its former place, but the gallows had disappeared—equality in death was decreed.

On the 1st Prairial, Paris discovered that it was starving. Famine drove the inhabitants of the faubourgs to the Convention. Haggard, in tatters, and famished, they invaded the chamber, and the deputy Féraud was killed in trying to defend the president, Boissy d'Anglas. Seeing the confusion which this event brought about in the Convention, Boissy d'Anglas put on his hat. Then they showed him Féraud's head on the end of a pike, whereupon he took off his hat, bowed reverently, and put it on again. But during that performance, Boissy d'Anglas, who had sympathized largely with the Revolution, almost became converted to royalism.

On the 16th of the same month, Louis Charles of France, Duc de Normandie, pretender to the throne under the name of Louis XVII., he of whom the Duc d'Orléans said at a supper: "The son of the Duc de Coigny shall never be my king!" died of scrofula at the Temple, at the age of ten years two months and twelve days. But even in the times of the Republic the old axiom of the French monarchy survived: "The king is dead, long live the king!" and at once Louis de Provence proclaimed himself, on his own private authority, king of France and Navarre, under the title of Louis XVIII.

Then came the terrible day of Quiberon, during which, according to Pitt, "English blood did not flow," and, according to Sheridan, "English honor streamed from every pore."

Meantime the victories of Hoche and Pichegru had borne fruit. In consequence of the recovery of the lines of Weissembourg, at which our readers were present, when the tri-color flag was seen triumphantly waving in the hands of Saint-Just as he crossed the frontier, and floated victoriously over Bavaria, Frederick William, who had been the first to

invade French territory, recognized the French Republic and made peace with it. Having captured no territory from each other, the two powers had nothing to restore. But eighty thousand slept on the plains of Alsace and Champagne, and the terrible strife had begun which neither Jena nor Leipsic was to terminate.

Meantime the army of the Eastern Pyrenees had invaded Biscay, Vittoria, and Bilbao. Already master of that part of the frontier to which access was most difficult, the French, whom their last victories had brought to the neighborhood, of Pampeluna, were in a position to capture the capital of Navarre, and open an easy road to the two kingdoms of Castile and that of Aragon. Whereupon the king of Spain made proposals of peace.

This was the second crowned head which had recognized the existence of the French Republic; and in recognizing it, the king tacitly condoned what he no doubt regarded as the murder of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette.

The peace was signed. Before the necessities of war, family ties ceased to be considered. France abandoned her conquests beyond the Pyrenees, and Spain ceded to France her possessions on the island of Saint-Domingo. But, as we have just said, it is not from the standpoint of material accessions that the question of peace with Spain must be considered. No! the question was a moral one.

This the reader will already have understood. This defection of Charles IV. from the royal cause was an immense step, and one that was far more important than that taken by Frederick William. Frederick William was not bound in any way to the Bourbons of France, while, in signing the peace with the Republic, the Spanish king ratified all the decrees of the Convention.

Meantime the Army of the North, which was engaged with the Austrians, took Ypres and Charleroi, won the battle of Fleurus, recaptured Landrecies, occupied Namur and Treves, reconquered Valenciennes, and took Crève-Cœur, Ulrich, Gorcomm, Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Rotterdam, and The Hague. At last an unheard-of thing happened—something which had never been seen before, and which until then had been absent from the picturesque annals of French warfare; the Dutch men-of-war, frozen in the ice, were captured by a regiment of hussars. This strange feat of arms, which seemed to be a caprice of Providence in behalf of the French, led to the capitulation of Zeeland.



CHAPTER II

A GLIMPSE OF PARIS—THE INCROYABLES

All these great victories naturally had their echo in Paris—Paris, that short-sighted city which has ever had a limited horizon, save when some great national excitement has driven her beyond her material interests. Paris, weary of bloodshed, eagerly sought after pleasure, and was only too glad to turn her eyes toward the theatre of war, so glorious was the drama which was there being enacted.

Most of the players of the Comédie-Française and the Théâtre Feydeau, who had been imprisoned as royalists, had been liberated after the 9th Thermidor. Larive, Saint-Prix, Molé, Dazincourt, Saint-Phare, and Elleviou had been received with frantic applause at the Comédie-Française and at the Feydeau. Everybody rushed to the theatres, where the "Marseillaise" was beginning to give place to the "Reveil du Peuple." And at last the *jeunesse dorée* (gilded youth) of Fréron began to appear.

Every day we utter those words "Fréron" and "jeunesse dorée" without having a clear idea of what they mean. Let us see.

There have been two Frérons in France; one was an honorable man, an upright and severe critic, who may perhaps have been mistaken, but who erred in good faith. This was Fréron, senior—Elie-Catherine Fréron. The other knew neither law nor faith, his only religion was hate, his sole motive was vengeance, and his one god was self-interest. This was Fréron, junior—Louis-Stanislas Fréron.

The father saw the whole of the eighteenth century pass before him. He was opposed to every innovation in art, and, in the name of Racine and Boileau, he attacked all such in literature. He was opposed to all political innovations, and attacked them in the name of religion and royalty. He recoiled before none of the giants of modern philosophism.^[4]

We do not believe that *philosophism* is good French from the standpoint of the academician, but it expresses our meaning better than *philosophy* does.

He attacked Diderot, who had come from his little town of Langres in sabots and jacket, half priest, half philosopher. He attacked Jean-Jacques, who had come from Geneva, penniless and without a jacket. He attacked D'Alembert, a foundling discovered on the steps of a church, who was for a long time called Jean Lerond, from the name of the place where he was found. He attacked those great lords called Buffon and Montesquieu. Finally, surviving even the anger of Voltaire, who had tried to injure him with his satire, "The Poor Devil," to kill him with his epigrams, and to annihilate him with his comedy of "The Scotchwoman," he stood up and cried out to Voltaire in the midst of his triumph, "Remember that thou art mortal!"

He died before his two great antagonists, Voltaire and Rousseau. In 1776 he succumbed to an attack of gout, occasioned by the suppression of his journal, "The Literary Year." This had been his weapon, and when it was broken he no longer cared to live.

The son, who had for godfather King Stanislas, and, who had been a schoolfellow of Robespierre, drank to the dregs the draught which public opinion had poured into the paternal cup.

The injuries accumulated during thirty years upon the father's head fell like an avalanche of shame upon the son; and as his heart held neither faith nor fidelity, he could not bear up under them. Belief in a duty nobly fulfilled had made the father invincible. The son, having no counterpoise to the scorn which overwhelmed him, became ferocious; wrongfully held in contempt, since he was not responsible for his father's acts, he resolved to make himself hated on his own account. The laurels which Marat culled in editing "L'Ami du Peuple" destroyed Fréron's rest. He founded "The Orator of the People."

Naturally timid, Fréron could not restrain his cruelty, being too weak and fearful. When sent to Marseilles he became the terror of the city. While Carlier drowned his prisoners at Nantes, and Collot d'Herbois shot his at Lyons with musketry, at Marseilles Fréron did better—he used grape-shot.

One day, after a discharge of artillery, suspecting that some had fallen unharmed with those who were struck, and were counterfeiting death, he called out, in order to save the time necessary to search for them: "Let those who are not harmed stand up, and they will be pardoned."

The unfortunates who were not hurt trusted in his word, and stood up.

"Fire!" said Fréron.

And the gunners began again, doing their work with more accuracy, for this time no one stood up.

When he returned to Paris, Paris had made a step on the road to mercy. The friend of Robespierre became his enemy. The Jacobin took a step backward and became a Cordelier. He scented the 9th Thermidor. He made himself a Thermidorian with Barras and Tallien, he denounced Fouquier-Tinville, and, like Cadmus, he sowed the teeth of the dragon which was called the Revolution, and they sprang up at once amid the blood of the old régime and the filth of the new, in the shape of that *jeunesse dorée* which took his name, and whose chief he was.

The *jeunesse dorée*, as distinguished from the *sans-culottes*, who wore short hair, round jackets, trousers, and the red cap, either wore long tresses of hair, revived from the time of Louis XIII., and called "cadenettes" (from the name of its inventor, Cadenet, a younger son of Luynes), or hair falling over their shoulders, in what was styled "dog's-ears." They also revived the use of powder, and wore it plentifully upon their hair, which was turned back with a comb. Their morning costume consisted of a very short frock-coat and small-clothes of black or green velvet. When in full-dress they wore, instead of this frock-coat, a coat of light color cut square, buttoned over the stomach, with tails coming down to the calves of their legs. Their muslin cravat was high and had enormous ends. The waistcoat was of piqué or white dimity, with broad facings and trimmings; two watch-chains hung over small-clothes of gray or apple-green satin, which came down half-way over the calves of the legs, where they buttoned with three buttons, and were finished off with a knot of ribbon. Silk stockings, striped either red, yellow, or blue, and pumps, which were the more elegant in proportion to their lightness, an opera-hat under the arm, and an enormous cane in the hand, completed the costume of an *Incroyable*.

Now why did those scoffers, who seize upon everything, call the individuals who compose the gilded youth of Paris the *incroyables*? We are about to tell you.

Change of dress did not suffice to distinguish a man from the revolutionists, he must also change his pronunciation. A honeyed dialect was substituted for the rude speech of 1793 and the democratic thou; consequently, instead of rolling their *r*'s as the pupils of the conservatory do to-day, they suppressed them altogether, and the letter became very near being entirely lost, like the Greek dative. Its bones were taken out of the language, together with its strength, and instead, as formerly, of giving one another their *Parrole d'honneur*, with a strong emphasis on the consonant, they contented themselves with giving their *Paole d'honneu*.

According to circumstances, they had a *gande paole d'honneu*, or a *petite paole d'honneu*; but whichever of these two was used to support something either difficult or impossible to believe, the listener, too polite to contradict the person with whom he was conversing, contented himself with saying: "It is incoyable" (incredible), suppressing the *r* in *incroyable*.

Whereupon the other would say: "I give you my solemn grande (or, as they said, *gande*) word of honor."

And then, of course, no doubt remained.

Hence the designation *Incroyable* changed to *Incoyable*, given to the *jeunesse dorée*.

CHAPTER III

THE MERVEILLEUSES

The *incoyable*, that hybrid of the Revolution, had his feminine counterpart, like him born of the same epoch. She was called the *meveilleuse*.

She borrowed her raiment, not from a new fashion like the *incoyable*, but from antiquity, from the Greek and Corinthian draperies of the Phrynes and the Aspasia. Tunic, peplum, and mantle, all were cut after the fashion of antiquity. The less a woman had on to conceal her nakedness the more elegant she was. The true *meveilleuse*, or *merveilleuses*—for that of course was the real word—had bare arms and legs, the tunic, modelled after that of Diana, was often separated at the side, with nothing more than a cameo to catch the two parts together above the knee.

But this was not enough. The ladies took advantage of the warm weather to appear at balls and at the promenade with filmy garments more diaphanous than the clouds which enveloped Venus, when she led her son to Dido. Æneas did not recognize his mother until she emerged from the clouds. *Incessut patuit dea*, says Virgil, "by her step was the goddess known." These ladies, however, did not need to emerge from their clouds in order to be seen, for they were perfectly visible through them, and those who took them for goddesses must have done so only out of courtesy. This airy tissue of which Juvenal speaks became all the rage.

Besides private parties they met at public balls. People gathered either at the Lycée-Bal or the Hôtel Thélusson to mingle their tears and their plans of vengeance with their dancing. These assemblies were called the "Balls of the Victims," and, indeed, no one was admitted to them unless he or she had had relatives either drowned by Carrier, guillotined by Robespierre, shot by Collot d'Herbois, or blown to pieces by Fréron.

Horace Vernet, who designed costumes for a living, has left a charming portfolio of the costumes of that period drawn from life with that delightful wit with which Heaven had endowed him. Nothing could be more amusing than this grotesque collection, and it is difficult to imagine how an *incoyable* and a *meveilleuse* could meet without laughing in each other's faces.

But some of the costumes adopted by the fops at these balls of the victims were terrible in character. Old General Piré has told me twenty times that he has met *incoyables* at these balls wearing waistcoats and trousers made of human skins. Those who mourned only some distant relative, like an aunt or an uncle, contented themselves with dipping their little finger in some blood-red liquid; when this was the case they cut off the corresponding finger of their glove, and carried their little pot of blood to the ball to renew the color, as ladies did their rouge-pots.

While dancing, they conspired against the Republic. This was easy, because the Convention, which had its national police, had no Parisian police. It is a singular fact that public murder seemed to have destroyed private murder; and never were fewer crimes committed in France than during the years of '93, '94 and '95. Passions had other outlets.

The moment was approaching, however, when the Convention, that terrible Convention, which had abolished royalty on the 21st of September, when it entered upon its functions to the sound of the guns of Valmy, and had proclaimed the Republic—the moment was approaching when the Convention was to abdicate its power. It had been a cruel mother. It had devoured the Girondins, the Cordeliers, the Jacobins, that is to say, the most eloquent, the most energetic, and the most intelligent of her children. But it had been a devoted daughter. It had successfully battled with foes without and within. It had raised fourteen armies. To be sure, they had been badly clothed, poorly shod, badly cared for, and still more poorly paid. But what did that matter? These fourteen armies not only drove the enemy on all sides from the frontier, but they took the Duchy of Nice and Savoy, marched against Spain and laid hands on Holland.

It created the National Institute, the Polytechnic School, the Normal School, the Conservatories of Art and Science, and established a national budget. It promulgated eight thousand three hundred and seventy decrees, most of them revolutionary. It gave a tremendous strength of character to men and things. Grandeur was gigantic, courage was temerity, and stoicism, impassibility. Never was colder disdain expressed for the executioner; never was blood shed with less remorse.

Do you know how many parties there were in France during the years of '93 to '95? Thirty-three. Would you like to know their names?

Ministerial, Partisans of Civil Life, Knights of the Dagger, Men of the 10th of August, Men of September, Girondins,

Brissotins, Federalists, Men of the State, Men of the 31st of May, Moderates, Suspects, Men of the Plain, Toads of the Marsh, Men of the Mountain.

All these in 1793 alone. We now pass to 1794.

Alarmists, Men of Pity, Sleepers, Emissaries of Pitt and Coburg, Muscadins, Hebertists, Sans-Culottes, Counter-Revolutionists, Inhabitants of the Ridge, Terrorists, Maratists, Cut-throats, Drinkers of Blood, Patriots of 1789, Companions of Jehu, Chouans.

Let us add the *jeunesse dorée* of Fréron, and we come to the 22d of August—the day when the new constitution, that of the year III., after having been debated article by article, was adopted by the Convention. The gold louis was then worth twelve hundred francs in assignats.

It was during this latter period that André-Chénier, the brother of Marie-Joseph Chénier, was beheaded. His execution took place on the 25th of July, 1794, at eight o'clock in the morning; that is to say, on the 7th Thermidor, two days before the death of Robespierre. His companions in the cart were MM. de Montalembert, De Créquy, De Montmorency, De Loiserolles—that sublime old man who took his son's place and cheerfully died in his stead—and finally Roucher, the author of "The Months," who did not know that he was to die with André Chénier until he saw him in the cart, when he uttered an exclamation of joy, and, seating himself near him, recited those beautiful lines of Racine:

Now fortune doth assume a newer trend,
Since thee again I find, thou faithful friend;
Her wrath already hath unbent,
And thus our lot in common blent.

A friend, who dared to risk his life by following the cart in order to prolong the final farewell, heard the two poets speaking of poetry, love and the future. On the way André Chénier recited his last verses to his friend, which he was in the act of writing when he was summoned by the executioner. He had them with him written in pencil; and after having read them to Roucher, he gave them to the third friend, who did not leave him until they had reached the scaffold. They were thus preserved; and Latouche, to whom we owe the only edition we have of André Chénier's poems, was enabled to include them in the volume we all know by heart:

As a last soft breeze, a tender ray,
Gleams at the close of a lovely day,
So doth my lyre at the scaffold sound its lay;
Perhaps e'en now the forfeit I must pay!
And e'er the hour its appointed round
With fleeting resonance hath wound,
Tipping the sixty steps of its allotted time,
Unending sleep will close these eyes of mine.
And e'er this verse I now begin shall fade,
The messenger of Death, ill-omened harbinger of shade,
With its black escort of ill-fame
Along its darkling corridors will speed my name.

As he mounted the scaffold, André put his hand to his forehead and said with a sigh: "And yet I did have something there!"

"You are mistaken," cried the friend who was not to die; and pointing to his heart he added, "it is there."

André Chénier, for whose sake we have wandered from our subject, and whose memory has drawn these few words from us, was the first to plant the standard of a new poetry. No one before him had written verses like his. Nay, more; no one will ever write like verses after him.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECTIONS

The day the Convention proclaimed the Constitution of the Year III., every one exclaimed: "The Convention has signed its death-warrant."

In fact it was expected that, as in the case of the Constituent Assembly, it would, by a self-sacrifice little understood, forbid to its retiring members election to the Assembly which was to succeed them. It did nothing of the kind. The Convention understood very well that the last vital spark of Republicanism was hidden within its own body. With a people so volatile as the French, who in a moment of enthusiasm had overturned a monarchy which had endured eight centuries, the children of the Republic could not in three years have become so rooted in their habits and customs as safely to be left to follow the natural course of events. The Republic could be adequately guarded only by those who had created it, and who were interested in perpetuating it.

But who were they?

Who, indeed, save the members of the Convention which had abolished the feudal constitution on the 10th of July and the 4th of August, 1789; which had overturned the throne on the 10th of August, 1792, and which, from the 21st of January to the time of which we are writing, had fought the whole of Europe, had compelled Prussia and Spain to sue for peace, and had driven Austria beyond the frontiers. Therefore, on the 5th Fructidor (August 22), the Convention decreed that the Legislative Assembly should be composed of two bodies—the Council of the Five Hundred and the Council of the Ancients; that the first should comprise five hundred members, upon whom should devolve the duty of originating bills, and the second two hundred and fifty, whose sanction should be necessary to make them law; that these two bodies should include two-thirds of the present Convention, and that one-third only should therefore be composed of new members.

It remained to be seen who should have the responsibility of the choice. Would the Convention itself name those of its members who were to become part of the new body, or would that duty devolve upon the electoral colleges?

On the 13th Fructidor (August 30), after a stormy session, it was decided that the electoral colleges should make the selection. The determination once arrived at, these two days were designated the 5th Fructidor and the 13th Fructidor, respectively.

Perhaps we are dwelling a little longer than is necessary upon this purely historical portion of our work; but we are rapidly approaching the terrible day of the 13th Vendémiaire—the first on which the Parisians heard the sound of cannon in their streets—and we wish to fasten the crime upon its real authors.

Paris then, as now, although in a lesser degree, since its centralization had lasted only four or five years at the time—Paris was then the brain of France. What Paris accepted, France sanctioned. This was clearly demonstrated when the Girondins unsuccessfully attempted to unite the provinces.

Now Paris was divided into forty-eight Sections. These Sections were not royalist; on the contrary, they protested that they were attached to the Republic. Except for two or three, whose reactionary opinions were well-known, none would have fallen into the error of sacrificing so many citizens, among them some truly great men, for a principle, and then have rejected that principle before it had borne fruit. But Paris, terrified at finding herself knee-deep in blood, stopped short three-quarters of the way and roused herself to fight the Terrorists, who wanted the executions to continue, while the city was desirous that they should cease. So that, without deserting the flag of the Revolution, she showed herself unwilling to follow that flag further than the Girondins and the Cordeliers had carried it.

This flag would then become her own, since it sheltered the remains of the two parties we have named. It would henceforth be that of the moderate Republic, and would carry the device: "Death to the Jacobins!"

But the precautions of the Convention were designed to save those few Jacobins who had escaped the 9th Thermidor, and in whose hands alone the Convention wished to place the holy Ark of the Republic.

Without suspecting it, however, the Sections, fearful of a return of the Reign of Terror, served the royalists better than their most devoted friends could have done.

Never had so many strangers been seen in Paris. The hotels were crowded from cellar to garret. The Faubourg Saint-

Germaine, which had been deserted for six months, was crowded with returned emigrés, Chouans, refractory priests, men who had been employed on the military trains, and divorced women.

There was a rumor that Tallien and Hoche had gone over to the royalists. The truth was that the latter had converted Rovère and Saladin, and that there was no occasion for them to hold out inducements to Lanjuinais, Boissy d'Anglas, Henry de Larivière and Lesage, who had always been royalists, even when they wore the Republican masks.

It was reported that the royalists had made Pichegru extraordinary offers, and that, although he had refused them at first, he had at last yielded to them, and that, for a million francs in ready money, two hundred thousand francs from the funds, the Château of Chambord, the duchy of Artois, and the government of Alsace, the transaction had been arranged.

Much astonishment was occasioned by the great number of returned emigrés, some with false passports and under assumed names, others giving their real names, and demanding that they should be erased from the list of the proscribed; others with false certificates of residence, which vouched for the fact that they had never left France. Decrees, insisting that all returned emigrés should return to their own districts, and there await the decision of the Committee of Public Safety, were issued in vain. They found means to evade these decrees and to remain in Paris. It was felt, not without uneasiness, that accident alone had not brought so many men of the same political faith to the capital at the same time. It was generally conceded that some malign influence was at work, and that at a given moment the earth would open beneath the feet of one of the numerous parties which abounded in Paris.

A great many gray coats with black and green collars were seen, and every one turned to look at them. They were the Chouan colors. Wherever these young men, who wore the royal livery, were seen, brawls were almost sure to ensue, which thus far had passed for private quarrels.

Dessault and Marchenna, the most famous pamphleteers of the day, covered the walls with posters inciting the Parisians to insurrection. Old La Harpe, the pretended pupil of Voltaire, who began by vowing him the most servile adoration and ended by rejecting him—La Harpe, after being a furious demagogue, during an imprisonment became a most violent reactionary, and insulted the Convention which had honored him. A man named Lemaistre kept a house in Paris where the royalist propaganda was openly carried on, and was in communication with several provincial branches. He hoped by increasing their number to convert France into one immense Vendée. There was an important branch at Nantes, which, of course, received its orders from Paris. Now Lemaistre, as was well known, had given a splendid dinner to the electors of Nantes, at the end of which the host, in imitation of the guards of Versailles, had had a dish of white cockades served. Each guest took one and fastened it in his hat.

Not a day passed that did not bring with it news of the death of some patriot by clubbing. The murderer was always either an *incroyable* or a young man in a gray coat. These attacks usually occurred in the cafés of the Rue de la Loi, formerly the Rue Richelieu, at the restaurateur Garchi's house, at the Théâtre Feydeau, or on the Boulevard des Italiens. The cause of these disturbances was evidently to be found in the opposition made by the Sections to the decrees of the 5th and the 13th Fructidor, which had declared that the council should be composed of two-thirds of the members of the Convention. It is true, as we have already said, that these two-thirds were to be named, not by the Convention itself, as the Sections had at first feared, but by the primary assemblies. Still, they had hoped for a complete change, and for an entirely reactionary Chamber.

A president had at first been talked of; but the monarchical tendencies of that proposed installation were so evident, that Louvet, the Girondin who had escaped being murdered, cried out at the Convention: "Yes, so that a Bourbon may be appointed in a day or two!" On this hint, which showed that a presidency would inevitably lead to royalty, the council was led to propose an executive directory composed of five members, a majority of whom should rule, each member retiring by rotation, and appointing responsible ministers.

These propositions were voted upon in the following manner (for never, even in the most progressive days of the Revolution, had elections been upon such a broad basis as now): Votes were cast at two elevated stages which served as polling places. All citizens of the age of twenty-one met at the primary assemblies, on the 1st Prairial, and selected the electoral colleges. These electoral colleges met on the 20th Prairial to appoint the two councils. The two councils, in their turn, elected the Directory.

CHAPTER V

THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECTION LE PELETIER

As the election could not take place on the 1st Prairial, since that date was already past, the 20th Fructidor was appointed.

It was hoped that the first act of the French, reunited after such terrible occurrences, would be like that of the Federation at the Champ de Mars—an act of fraternity, and that a hymn would be sung advocating forgiveness of wrongs. It was on the contrary a sacrifice to vengeance! All the pure, disinterested and energetic patriots were driven from the Sections, which began to organize insurrection. The defeated patriots hurried to the Convention, where they related what had happened, thereby putting the Convention on its guard against the Sections. Furthermore they demanded the restoration of their arms, declaring that they would use them in defence of the Republic.

The next day, and the day following, the Convention realized the full danger of the situation when they saw that, out of the forty-eight Sections composing the population of Paris, forty-seven had accepted the Constitution but had rejected the decrees. The Section of the Quinze-Vingts alone had accepted both the Constitution and the decrees.

On the other hand, the armies, two of which were reduced to inaction by the peace with Prussia and with Spain, voted without reserve, amid cries of enthusiasm. The army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, the only one which was still actively engaged, had conquered at Wattignies, raised the siege of Mauberge, triumphed at Fleurus, given Belgium to France, crossed the Rhine at Dusseldorf, besieged Mayence, and followed with the victories of the Ourthe and the Roer, thus securing the Rhine to France. This army paused upon the battlefield, where it had just won a victory, and over the bodies of the Frenchmen who had just died for liberty, swore fidelity to the Constitution, which, while it put an end to the Terror, still maintained the Republic and the Revolution.

The day which brought the news of this enthusiastic vote was a great one for the Convention and for all true patriots of France. On the 1st Vendémiaire, of the Year IV. (23d September, 1795), the result of the voting was announced. The Constitution was unanimously accepted. The decrees were passed by an immense majority. In some places votes had even been cast for a king—which showed how great was the freedom which had obtained during the two months following the 9th Thermidor.

This news created the greatest excitement in Paris—an excitement at once twofold and varied in character. There was joy among the patriots who sided with the Convention, and fury among the royalist Sections.

Then it was that the Section Le Peletier, known during the Revolution as the Section of the Daughters of Saint Thomas, the most reactionary of all the Sections, and the one whose grenadiers had resisted the men from Marseilles on the 10th of August, set up this decree:

"The power of every constituted body ceases before that of the assembled people."

This decree, favorably voted upon by the Section, was converted into a resolution, and sent to the forty-seven other Sections, who received it with favor. It was a simple method of proclaiming the dissolution of the Assembly.

The Convention was not intimidated. It replied by a declaration and a decree. It declared that if its power was threatened it would retire to one of the provincial towns and there continue to exercise its functions. It decreed that all the territory conquered on the French side of the Rhine, as well as Belgium, Liège, and Luxemburg, should thereafter belong to France. Thus did it reply to the threat of its overthrow by a proclamation of its grandeur.

The Section, treating with the Convention as power with power, then sent its president, at the head of six members, to notify it of what it termed a Measure of Protection; namely, of a decree issued by the Section declaring that, before the will of the assembled people, the powers of all the constituent bodies should cease.

The president was a young man of twenty-four or five, and although he was dressed quietly, a supreme elegance, due more to his bearing than to his garments, was manifest in his whole person. He was attired fashionably, without exaggeration, in a frock-coat of dark red velvet with jet buttons, and buttonholes worked in black silk. A cravat of white foulard with floating ends swathed his neck; a waistcoat of white piqué with bright blue flowers, trousers of pearl-gray tricot, white silk stockings, pumps, and a low, broad-brimmed hat with a pointed crown, completed his attire. He had the clear, fair complexion of a man of the North or East, eyes both piercing and earnest, and fine white teeth, with full red lips. A tri-color sash, folded in such a way that very little of it was visible save the white, girdled his waist, which was

admirably shaped; a sword hung from this sash, and he carried two pistols stuck in it.

He advanced alone to the bar of the Convention, and in that tone of lofty insolence which had not yet descended to the bourgeoisie, or to which that class had not attained, he said in a loud voice, addressing the president, Boissy d'Anglas:

"Citizen-Representative, in the name of the Mother Section, of which I have the honor to be president, and in the name of the forty-seven other Sections—the Section of the Quinze-Vingts alone excepted—I come to announce to you that you are deprived of your powers and that your reign is over. We approve of the Constitution, but we reject the decrees; you have no right to nominate yourselves. It is for you to deserve our choice, and not to command it."

"The Convention recognizes no power, either that of the Mother Section or of any other," said Boissy d'Anglas; "and it will treat as rebels all who refuse to obey its decrees."

"And we," said the young man, "will treat as oppressor any power which shall try to impose an illegal act upon us."

"Take care, citizen," said Boissy d'Anglas, in his calm voice, which carried hidden menace in it. "No one has a right to raise his voice above that of the president of this assembly."

"Except me," said the young man—"except me, for I am above him."

"And who are you?"

"I am the sovereign people."

"And who then are we whom the people have elected?"

"From the moment that the people reassembled and deprived you of the power with which they had vested you, you ceased to be of importance. Appointed three years ago, you are weakened, wearied, worn out with the struggle of those three years. You represent the needs of an epoch which is past, and which has disappeared. Could any one, three years ago, have foreseen the events which have taken place? Nominated only three days ago, I represent the will of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow! You were elected by the people. Admitted! But by the people of '92, whose work it was to tear down royalty, to establish the rights of man, and to drive the foreigner from the frontier, to erect scaffolds, to bring down heads which were too high, and to divide property. But your work is done; whether well or ill it matters not; it is done, and the 9th Thermidor gives you your dismissal. To-day, Men of the Storm, you wish to perpetuate your powers, when the needs which created you have disappeared; when royalty is dead, the enemy driven out, and even property is divided, scaffolds are useless. You desire for your own selfish purposes, your own personal ambition, to perpetuate your powers, to control our choice, and to force yourselves upon the people. The people do not want you. A pure epoch requires pure hands. The Chamber must be purged of the Terrorists, whose names are inscribed in history as the men of September and the men of the guillotine. It must be—it is the logical sequence of the situation, the expression of the conscience of the people, the will of forty-seven Sections; that is to say, of the population of Paris!"

This speech was listened to in astonished silence, but it had scarcely ended in a voluntary pause on the part of the orator, when a terrible uproar burst forth in the Chamber and the tribunes. The young president of the Section Le Peletier had just voiced aloud what every royalist committee, the emigrés, and the Chouans had been whispering at all the street corners for the past fortnight. The question between the monarchists and the Republicans was clearly defined for the first time.

The president of the Convention rang his bell violently to restore order; then, seeing that no attention was paid to it, he put on his hat. Meanwhile the president of the Section Le Peletier, with one hand on his pistols, was calmly waiting until the clamor should have sufficiently subsided for the president of the Convention to reply to him.

It was long before silence could be restored, but order came at last. Boissy d'Anglas made a sign that he wished to speak. He was the very man to reply to such a speaker. The overbearing arrogance of the one was met by the disdainful pride of the other. The monarchical aristocrat had spoken, and the liberal aristocrat was about to reply to him. Although there was a frown upon the president's brow, and his eyes were dark and menacing, his voice was calm.

"You have listened to the orator who has just spoken," he said. "May you judge of the strength of the Convention by its patience. If any man had dared a few months ago to use here the language which the president of the Section Le Peletier has employed, his rebellious utterances would not have been heard to an end. The orator's arrest would have been immediately decreed, and his head would have fallen upon the scaffold the following day. And why? Because in days of carnage we are in doubt about everything, and we therefore destroy everything that may threaten our rights, that we may doubt no more. In the days of peace we pursue a different course, because we are no longer doubtful about our rights,

and because, though attacked by the Sections, we have behind us the whole of France and our invincible armies. We have listened to you without impatience, and we can therefore reply to you without anger. Go back to those who sent you; tell them that we give them three days in which to return to their allegiance, and that if they do not voluntarily obey the decrees within three days we shall compel them to do so."

"And you," replied the young man, "if within three days you have not resigned your commission, if you have not withdrawn the decrees, and have not proclaimed the freedom of the elections, we declare to you that Paris will march against the Convention, and that it will feel the anger of the people."

"Very good," said Boissy d'Anglas; "it is now the 10th Vendémiaire—"

The young man did not allow him to finish.

"On the 13th Vendémiaire," said he; "I give you my word that that will be another bloody date to add to your history!"

And rejoining his companions, he went out with them, threatening the entire assembly with a gesture. No one knew his name, for he had been appointed president of the Section Le Peletier through Lemaistre's instrumentality only three days before.

But every one said: "He is neither a man of the people nor a bourgeois; he must be an aristocrat."

CHAPTER VI

THREE LEADERS

That same evening the Section Le Peletier convened in its committee rooms, and secured the co-operation of the Sections Butte-des-Moulins, Contrat-Social, Luxembourg, Théâtre-Française, Rue Poissonnière, Brutus, and Temple. Then it filled the streets of Paris with bands of *muscadins* (the word is synonymous with *incroyables*, only with a wider meaning), who went about shouting, "Down with the Two-thirds Men!"

The Convention, on the other hand, mustered all the troops it could command at the camp of Sablons, about six thousand men, under General Menou, who in 1792 had commanded the second camp formed near Paris, and had been sent to the Vendée, where he had been defeated. These antecedents had secured him, on the 2d Prairial, the appointment of general of the interior, and had saved the Convention.

Some young men, shouting "Down with the Two-thirds Men!" had met a squad of Menou's soldiers, and refusing to disperse when ordered to do so, they had fired upon the soldiers, who had replied to their pistol-shots with gun-shots, and blood had been shed.

In the meantime—that is to say, on the evening of the 10th Vendémiaire—the young president of the Section Le Peletier, which was then in session at the convent of the Daughters of Saint Thomas (which was situated on the spot where the Bourse now stands), gave up the chair to the vice-president, and, jumping into a carriage, was driven rapidly to a large house in the Rue Nôtre-Dame-des-Victoires, belonging to the Jesuits. All the windows of this house were closed, and not a ray of light escaped them.

The young man stopped the carriage at the gate and paid the driver; then, when the carriage had turned the corner of the Rue du Puit-qui-parle, and the sound of the wheels had died away, he went a few steps further, and, making sure that the street was empty, knocked at the gate in a peculiar manner. The gate was opened so quickly that it was evident that some one was stationed behind it to attend to visitors.

"Moses," said the affiliated member who opened the gate.

"Manou," replied the new-comer.

The gate closed in answer to this response of the Hindoo to the Hebrew lawgiver, and the way being pointed out to the young president of the Section Le Peletier, he proceeded round the corner of the house. The windows overlooking the garden were closed as carefully as those which overlooked the street. The front door was open, however, though a guard stood before it. This time it was the new-comer who said: "Moses!"

And the other replied, "Manou!"

Thereupon the doorkeeper drew back to allow the young president to pass; and he, encountering no further obstacle, went straight to a third door, which admitted him to a room where he found the persons whom he was seeking. They were the presidents of the Sections Butte-des-Moulins, Contrat-Social, Luxembourg, Rue Poissonnière, Brutus and Temple, who had come to announce that they were ready to follow the Mother Section, and to join in the rebellion.

The new-comer had hardly opened the door when he was greeted by a man about forty-five years of age, wearing a general's uniform. This was citizen Auguste Danican, who had just been appointed general-in-chief of the Sections. He had served in the Vendée against the Vendéans, but, suspected of connivance with Georges Cadoudal, he had been recalled, had escaped the guillotine by a miracle only, thanks to the 9th Thermidor, and had subsequently taken his place in the ranks of the counter-revolution.

The royalist Sections were at first strongly inclined to nominate the young president of the Section Le Peletier, who was highly recommended by the royalist agency, through Lemaistre, and who had come from Besançon only three days earlier. But the latter, learning that overtures had already been made to Danican, and that, if he were deprived of the command, the Sections would probably feel his enmity, declared that he would be satisfied with second or even third place, always providing that he should have an equal opportunity to take as active a part as possible in the inevitable battle.

Danican left a man of low stature with a twisted mouth and sinister expression to speak to the visitor. This was Fréron. Fréron, repudiated by the Mountain, who abandoned him to the sharp stings of Moïse Bayle; Fréron, once a bigoted

Republican, but who had in turn been repudiated with disgust by the Girondins, who abandoned him to the withering curses of Isnard; Fréron, who, stripped of his false patriotism, though covered with the leprosy of crime, and feeling the need of sheltering himself behind the banner of some party, had joined the royalist faction which, like all parties who are on the losing side, was not too particular as to whom it admitted within its ranks.

We Frenchmen have passed through many revolutions, but not one of us can explain certain antipathies, which, in times of trouble, seem to attach to some political personages, and it appears equally difficult to attempt to explain certain illogical alliances. Fréron was nothing, and had in no way distinguished himself. He had neither mind, character, nor political distinction. As a journalist he was a mere hack, selling to the first comer what was left of his father's reputation and honor. Sent to the provinces as a representative of the people, he returned from Marseilles and Toulon, covered with royalist blood.

Explain it who can.

Fréron now found himself at the head of a powerful party in which youth, energy, and vengeance were conspicuous, a party which burned with the passions of the times—passions which, since the law was in abeyance, led to everything except public confidence.

Fréron had just been relating with much emphasis the exploits of the young men who had come to open rupture with Menou's soldiers.

The young president, on the contrary, reported with the utmost simplicity the occurrences at the Convention, adding that retreat had now become an impossibility. War had been declared between the representatives and the members of the Sections; victory would unquestionably remain with those who marched first to the attack.

But however pressing the matter, Danican declared that nothing could be done until Lemaistre had returned to the session with the person who was with him. He had scarcely finished speaking, however, when the chief of the royalist agencies re-entered the room, followed by a man about twenty-five, with a frank open face, curly blond hair which almost hid his forehead, prominent blue eyes, a short neck, broad chest, and limbs that would have become a Hercules. He wore the costume of the rich peasant of the Morbihan, save that he had added to it a gold braid about an inch wide, that bordered the collar and buttonholes of his coat, as well as the brim of his hat.

As the young leader advanced to meet him, the Chouan held out his hand. It was evident that the two conspirators knew they were to meet, and though unacquainted with each other, their recognition had been mutual.



CHAPTER VII

GENERAL ROUNDHEAD AND THE CHIEF OF THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU

Lemaistre introduced them. "General Roundhead," said he, designating the Chouan; "Citizen Morgan, leader of the Companions of Jehu," bowing to the president of the Section Le Peletier.

The two young men shook hands.

"Although Fate determined that our birthplaces should be at the two extremities of France," said Morgan, "one conviction unites us. Although we are of the same age, you, general, have already won renown, while I am unknown, or known only through the misfortunes of my house. It is to those misfortunes and my desire to avenge them that I owe the recommendation of the committee of the Jura, and the position which the Section Le Peletier has given me in making me its president on Monsieur Lemaistre's introduction."

"M. le Comte," said the royalist, bowing, "I have not the honor like you to belong to the nobility of France. I am simply a child of the stubble and the plow. When men are called, as we are, to risk their heads on the scaffold, it is well that they should know each other. One does not care to die in the company of those with whom they would not associate in life."

"Do all the children of the stubble and the plow express themselves as well as you do, general, in your country? If so, you do not need to regret that you have been born without the pale of that nobility to which I by accident belong."

"I may say, count," replied the young general, "that my education has not been precisely that of the Breton peasant. I was the eldest of ten children, and was sent to the college at Vannes, where I received a good education."

"And I have heard," added the man whom the Chouan called count, "that it was early predicted that you were destined to great things."

"I do not know that I ought to boast of that prediction, although it has already been fulfilled in part. My mother was sitting in front of our house, holding me in her arms, when a beggar passed, and stopping, leaned upon his stick to look at us. My mother, as was her custom, cut a piece of bread for him and gave him a penny. The beggar shook his head. Then touching my forehead with the tip of his bony finger, he said: 'There is a child who will bring about great changes in his family, and who will cause much trouble to the state.' Then, looking at me sadly, he added: 'He will die young, but he will have accomplished more than most old men,' and he continued on his way. Last year the prophecy was fulfilled as far as my family was concerned. I took part as you know in the insurrection of the Vendée of '93 and '94."

"And gloriously," interrupted Morgan.

"I did my best. Last year, while I was organizing the Morbihan, the soldiers and gendarmes surrounded our house. Father, mother, uncle and children were all carried off to prison at Brest. It was then that the prediction which had been made concerning me when I was a child recurred to my mother's mind. The poor woman reproached me with tears for being the cause of the misfortunes of the family. I tried to console her and to strengthen her by telling her that she was suffering for God and her king. But women do not appreciate the value of those two words. My mother continued to weep and died in prison in giving birth to another child. A month later my uncle died in the same prison. On his deathbed he gave me the name of one of his friends to whom he had loaned nine thousand francs; this friend had promised to return the sum whenever he should ask for it. When my uncle died my only thought was to escape from prison, obtain the money, and apply it to the cause of the insurrection. I succeeded. My uncle's friend lived at Rennes. I went to his house, only to learn that he had gone to Paris. I followed him here and obtained his address. I have just seen him, and faithful and loyal Breton that he is, he has returned me the money in gold, just as he borrowed it. I have it here in my belt," continued the young man, putting his hand to his hip. "Nine thousand francs in gold are worth two hundred thousand to-day. Do you throw Paris in confusion, and in a fortnight all the Morbihan will be in flames!"

The two young men had unconsciously drawn aside from the group and now found themselves in a recess of the window. The president of the Section Le Peletier looked about him, and seeing that no one was within hearing distance, he placed his hand on the young general's arm, and said:

"You have told me of yourself and your family, general; in return I owe you information concerning myself and mine. Morgan is an assumed name. My real name is Edouard de Sainte-Hermine. My father, Comte Prosper de Sainte-Hermine, was guillotined; my mother died of grief, my brother Léon de Sainte-Hermine was shot. In the same way that my father bequeathed his vengeance to my elder brother, so did he bequeath to me both my father's and his own. A boy

belonging to his district, who was present at his execution, brought me his foraging-cap—the last fraternal gift that he could send me. It meant, 'It is now your turn!' I began my work at once. Not being able to arouse the Jura and Alsace, which are strongly patriotic, I have with my friends, young noblemen from the vicinity of Lyons, organized bands for the purpose of seizing government money to send to you and your friends in the Morbihan and the Vendée. That is why I wanted to see you. We are destined to clasp hands across the whole of France."

"Only," said the general, laughing, "I hold out mine empty, while you give me yours full."

"That is a slight compensation for the glory which you gain every day, and in which we ourselves shall be wanting. But what will you? Every one must do God's work in the state in which God has placed him. That is why I have hastened here to do something worth doing, while the opportunity serves. What will result from our projected action? None can guess. If we have only Menou to oppose us, the Convention is lost, and on the day following its dissolution, the monarchy will be proclaimed and Louis XVIII. will ascend the throne."

"What, Louis XVIII.?" asked the Chouan.

"Yes, Louis XVII. died in prison; but from the royalist point of view he nevertheless reigned. You know the cry of the French monarchy, 'The King is dead; long live the King!' King Louis XVI. is dead; long live King Louis XVII.! King Louis XVII. dies; long live King Louis XVIII.! The regent succeeds his nephew, not his brother."

"A queer sort of reign, that of the young boy," said the Chouan, shrugging his shoulders. "A reign during which they guillotined his father, mother, brother and aunt; while he was kept a prisoner in the Bastille with a cobbler for a tutor! I must admit, my dear count, that the party to which I have given myself heart and soul is subject to peculiar aberrations which terrify me. Thus, suppose, which God forbid! that his majesty, Louis XVIII., should not ascend the throne for ten or fifteen years, would he still be supposed to have reigned over France during that time, no matter in what corner of the earth he had been hidden?"

"Yes."

"How absurd! But pardon me; I am a peasant, and therefore am not expected to understand everything. But royalty is my second religion, and for that, as for my first, I have faith."

"You are a brave man, general," said Morgan, "and whether or no we meet again I should like to have your friendship. If we do not meet again, it will be because I am dead—either shot or guillotined. In that case, just as my elder brother inherited vengeance from my father, and I in turn from him, so will my younger brother inherit from me. If royalty, thanks to the sacrifices we have made for it, is saved, we will be heroes. If, in spite of those sacrifices, it is lost, then we shall be martyrs. You see that in either case we have nothing to regret."

The Chouan was silent for a moment, then, looking earnestly at the young nobleman, he said: "M. le Comte, when men like you and I meet, and are fortunate enough to serve the same cause, they should swear each other—I will not say eternal friendship, for perhaps the nobleman would not condescend so far to the poor peasant—but an unalterable esteem. M. le Comte, I beg you to accept mine."

"General," said Morgan, with tears in his eyes, "I accept the esteem you offer me, and I offer you more than friendship, I offer fraternity."

Whereupon they threw themselves into each other's arms and embraced as though they were old in friendship.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAN IN THE GREEN COAT

Those present at this scene had listened and looked on from a distance without interruption, realizing that they had before them two powerful personalities. The principal of the royalist agency was the first to break the silence.

"Gentlemen," said he, "it is always a gain when two leaders, even when they are about to separate—the one to do battle in the east, the other on the west of France, and though they may never meet again—it is always something gained when they exchange fraternal pledges as the knights of the Middle Ages were wont to do. You are all witnesses of the oath which these two leaders, in a cause which is also our own, have taken. They are men who do more than they promise. One, however, must return to the Morbihan, to unite the movement there with our own. Let us, therefore, take leave of the general who has completed his work in Paris, and turn to our own which has begun well."

"Gentlemen," said the Chouan, "I would gladly offer to remain here and fight with you to-morrow or to-day, but I confess that I know little about street warfare. The war I am used to carrying on is in ditches, ravines, bushes, and thick forests. Here I should be but one more soldier—there a chieftain would be wanting; and, since Quiberon of mournful memory, there are but two of us, Mercier and I."

"Go, my dear general," said Morgan; "you are fortunate to be able to fight in the open with no fear lest a chimney fall upon your head. God bring me to you, or you to me again!"

The Chouan took leave of every one, and more tenderly of his new friend, perhaps, than of his old acquaintances. Then noiselessly and on foot, as if he were the least of the royalist officers, he gained the Barrière d'Orléans, while Danican, Lemaistre, and the young president of the Section Le Peletier laid their plans for the following day. As he departed, they all remarked: "He is a formidable fellow, that Cadoudal!"

About the same time that he whose incognito we have just betrayed was taking leave of Morgan and his companions, and was making his way to the Barrière d'Orléans, a group of those young men of whom we have already spoken crossed from the Rue de la Loi to the Rue Feydeau, shouting: "Down with the Convention! Down with the Two-thirds Men! Long live the Sections!"

At the corner they found themselves face to face with a patrol of patriot soldiers, on whom the last orders of the Convention enjoined the greatest severity against all nocturnal brawlers.

The group equalled the patrol in number, and they received the three summonses required by law with hoots and jeers; their only reply to the third was a pistol-shot which wounded one of the soldiers.

The latter retaliated by a volley which killed one of the young men and wounded several others. The guns being discharged, the two bands were now on an equal footing as regards weapons. Thanks to their enormous canes, which in hands accustomed to wield them became veritable clubs, the men of the Sections could turn aside the bayonets as easily as they could parry the point of a sword in a duel. They could moreover strike blows which, when received on the chest, though they could not pierce like a sword-thrust, were equally dangerous, and when aimed at the head would fell a man as readily as a butcher fells an ox.

As usual, the brawl, which, owing to the number of persons engaged in it, assumed frightful proportions, set the whole neighborhood in a tumult. The uproar and turmoil were increased from the fact that it was the first night of a popular representation at the Théâtre Feydeau, then the fashionable theatre of Paris. They were playing "Toberne, or the Swedish Fisherman," the words by Patras, the music by Bruni; and "The Good Son," the words by Louis Henequin, and the music by Lebrun. Consequently, the Place Feydeau was thronged with carriages and the Passage Feydeau with playgoers on foot.

At the sound of the cries "Down with the Convention! Down with the Two-thirds Men!" and the firing, the carriages started off like so many arrows, some colliding with their neighbors; while the spectators on foot, fearing to be shot, arrested, or stifled in the narrow passage, broke through all barriers. Finally the windows opened, and men's voices could be heard raining imprecations upon the soldiers, while the softer tones of women encouraged the men of the Sections, who, as we have said, were among the handsomest, best-dressed, and wealthiest young men of Paris. The scene was lighted by the lanterns that swung from the arcades.

Suddenly a voice cried out in a tone of great anguish: "Citizen in the green coat, take care!"

The citizen in the green coat, who was face to face with two soldiers, at once realized that he was threatened from behind. He leaped aside with a haphazard blow of his cane, but to such good effect that it broke the arm of the soldier who was attacking him with his bayonet; then he thrust the iron-tipped stick in the face of a man who was just raising the stock of his gun to bring it down on his head. Afterward he looked up at the window whence the warning had come, and threw a kiss at a graceful form that was leaning over the rail of the balcony, and turned just in time to parry a bayonet-thrust before it had time to more than graze his chest.

At that moment help arrived for the soldiers from the Convention. A dozen men from the guard-house rushed up, crying: "Death to the Muscadins!"

The young man in the green coat was at once surrounded, but whirling his stick vigorously around his head, he managed to keep the soldiers at a distance while he beat a retreat toward the arcades. This retreat, not less skilful because less successful than that of Xenophon, was directed toward a massive door with iron panels artistically wrought, which the porter had just darkened by extinguishing the lantern hanging over it. But before this had happened, the young man, with the swift glance of a military leader, had glanced at the door, and discovered that it was not latched. If he could once reach that door, he could spring through it, close it behind him, and be in safety, unless, indeed, the doorkeeper was sufficiently patriotic to refuse a gold louis, which at that time was worth more than twelve hundred francs in paper money—a patriotism which was somewhat problematic.

But as though his enemies had divined his object, the attack redoubled in intensity as he approached the door, and, while the young man was extraordinarily skilful and strong, the fight had already lasted a quarter of an hour and had greatly impaired both his skill and his strength. Still, as the door was now only some two feet distant, he made a last effort, felled one of his adversaries with his stick, sent another reeling with a blow from his fist that landed on the man's chest, and reached the door, only to receive a blow from a gun-stock (fortunately the flat side) just as he pushed it open.

The blow was a violent one. Sparks danced before the young man's eyes, and his blood coursed wildly through his veins. But blinded as he was, his presence of mind did not desert him. He sprang back, propped himself against the door, which he closed with a bang behind him, and tossed a louis, as he had intended, to the porter, who had rushed out of his lodge on hearing the noise. Then, seeing a lighted staircase, he darted toward it, and, clinging to the balustrade, tottered up a dozen steps. Then it seemed to him that the walls of the house were falling and that the stairs were swaying beneath his feet, the staircase gave way, and he seemed to be rolling down a precipice.

Fortunately he had only fainted, but in doing so he had slipped gently down the stairs.

CHAPTER IX

AN INCROYABLE AND A MERVEILLEUSE

A cooling sensation brought him to. His glance, at first vague and undecided, gradually settled upon his surroundings. They were in nowise disquieting. He was in a boudoir, which was also used as a dressing-room, and was hung with pearl-gray satin dotted with roses. He was lying upon a sofa covered with the same material as the hangings.

A woman stood behind him, supporting his head with a pillow; another on her knees beside him was bathing his head with a perfumed sponge. This was what had caused that soothing sensation of coolness which had restored him to consciousness. The woman, or rather the young girl, who was bathing his head, was pretty and well dressed; but it was the prettiness and elegance of the waiting-maid. The young man's eyes, therefore, did not linger long upon her, but were raised almost immediately to the woman who stood over him, and who could be none other than the mistress. He uttered a cry of delight, for he recognized the same person who had warned him from the window, and he started as though he would rise and go to her; but two white hands, pressing his shoulders, held him down upon the couch.

"Not so fast, citizen Coster de Saint-Victor!" said the young woman; "we must dress your wound first; and after that we will see how far your gratitude will be allowed to carry you."

"Ah! then you know me, citizeness," exclaimed the young man, with a smile that disclosed teeth of a dazzling whiteness and a glance that few women could withstand. He had used the democratic "thou" in this speech.

"In the first place," said the young lady, "I wish to remind you that it is becoming very bad form for a man who follows the fashion as you do to say 'thou,' especially to ladies."

"Alas!" sighed the young man, "it is especially with them that the old fashion had its uses. Brutal as it may be when addressed to a man, 'thou' has a tender charm when a lovely woman is its recipient. I have always contended that the English sustained an incalculable loss when they abandoned its use. But I am too grateful, madame, not to obey you; only allow me to repeat my question, though I change its form: Do you know me?"

"Who does not know the handsome Coster de Saint-Victor, who would be the king of fashion and elegance, if the title of king were not abolished."

Coster de Saint-Victor turned suddenly and looked the young lady full in the face.

"Obtain the restoration of kings, madame," said he, "and I will hail the beautiful Aurélie de Saint-Amour as queen."

"So you know me, too, citizen?" said the young woman, laughing.

"Who does not know our modern Aspasia? This is the first time, though, that I have had the honor of seeing you so near at hand, madame, and—"

"And—you were saying?"

"That Paris has no need to envy Athens, nor yet Barras to envy Pericles."

"Come, come! that blow on the head was not as dangerous after all as I thought."

"What do you mean?"

"Because it has not impaired your wit."

"No," replied Coster de Saint-Victor, kissing her beautiful hand, "but it may have taken away my reason."

Just then the bell rang in a peculiar fashion, and the hand which Coster was holding trembled. Aurélie's waiting-maid rose and looked uneasily at her mistress.

"Madame," said she, "that is the citizen-general."

"Yes," replied the latter, "I recognized his ring."

"What will he say?" asked the maid.

"Nothing."

"What do you mean?"

"I shall not open the door." The courtesan shook her head rebelliously.

"You will not admit citizen-general Barras?" asked the terrified maid.

"What?" cried Coster de Saint-Victor, "was that citizen Barras who rang?"

"Yes," replied Mademoiselle Aurélie de Saint-Amour with a laugh, "and you see he is quite as impatient as ordinary mortals."

"But, madame—" persisted the maid.

"I am mistress in my own house," said the capricious courtesan, "and it pleases me to receive the citizen Coster de Saint-Victor, and it does not please me to receive citizen Barras. I open my door to the first, and I close it to the second, or rather I do not open it to the second."

"Pardon me, my generous hostess," cried Coster de Saint-Victor; "but I cannot permit you to make such a sacrifice. Allow your maid to admit the general, I beg of you, and while he is in your salon I will withdraw."

"And if I admit him only on condition that you do not withdraw?"

"Oh! then I will remain," said Coster, "and very willingly, too, I assure you."

The bell rang for the third time.

"Go and open the door, Suzette," said Aurélie.

Suzette ran out. Aurélie bolted the door of the boudoir behind her, extinguished the two candles which were burning on the dressing-table, and seeking Coster de Saint-Victor in the darkness, pressed her lips to his forehead, and went out murmuring: "Wait for me."

Then she went into the salon from the boudoir just as citizen-general Barras appeared in the door of the dining-room.

"And what is this I hear, my beauty," said Barras, "have they been cutting throats under your window?"

"Yes, my dear general, and my foolish Suzette did not dare to open the door for you. I had to tell her three times, before she would obey me, she was so fearful lest one of the combatants had come to demand shelter. In vain I told her that it was your ring. I thought I should be obliged to open the door for you myself. But to what do I owe the pleasure of your visit this evening?"

"A first representation at the Feydeau this evening; and I will take you if you will go with me."

"No, thank you; all this firing and shouting has upset my nerves. I am not well and I prefer to remain at home."

"Very well; but as soon as the piece is over I shall come and ask you for some supper."

"Ah! you did not let me know in time, and I have nothing to offer you."

"Do not worry about that, pretty one; I will pass Garchi's on my way to the theatre and will leave an order for them to send a bisque, a bechamel, a cold pheasant, some shrimps, some ice-cream and fruit—a mere trifle, you perceive."

"My dear friend, you had much better let me go to bed. I warn you that I shall be very cross."

"I will not prevent your going to bed. You can take supper in bed and be cross as comfortably as possible."

"You insist?"

"No, I implore. You know, madame, that you are sole mistress here, and that you have but to order, and that I, as the first of your servants, will obey."

"Oh! can I refuse a man who speaks like that? Go to the theatre, my lord, and your humble servant will await your return."

"My dear Aurélie, you are simply adorable, and I do not see why I have not had bars put at your windows like those of Rosine."

"What would be the good! You are the Count of Almaviva."

"There is no Cherubino hidden in your boudoir?"

"I will not say 'Here is the key,' but 'It is in the door.'"

"Well, see how magnanimous I am; if he is there I am going to give him time to escape. Au revoir, my beautiful goddess of love; expect me in an hour."

"Very well. And when you come back you must tell me about the play. I shall like that better than if I had seen it myself."

"Certainly, only I do not promise to sing it to you."

"When I want to hear singing, my good friend, I will send for Garat."

"And let it be said in passing, my dear Aurélie, that I think you send for him rather too often."

"Oh! do not be uneasy about that. He is protected by Madame Krüdener. She keeps as close to him as his shadow."

"They are putting up a pretty romance between them."

"Yes, in action."

"Are you not a little malicious?"

"Faith, no; I do not care enough. I leave that sort of thing to the great ladies who are virtuous and ugly."

"Once more, won't you come with me to the Feydeau?"

"No."

"Then au revoir."

"Au revoir."

Aurélie accompanied the general to the door of the salon, and Suzette followed him to the outer door of the apartment, which she closed and trebly locked after him. When the beautiful courtesan turned round, Coster de Saint-Victor was waiting for her on the threshold of the boudoir. She sighed, for he was marvellously handsome.

CHAPTER X

TWO PORTRAITS

Coster de Saint-Victor had not resumed the use of powder; he wore his hair in long, flowing curls, without comb or queue. It was jet-black like his eyelashes, which shaded eyes of a deep sapphire blue, which, according to the expression he chose to give them, were at times gentle and again full of commanding power. His complexion, which was now rather pale owing to his recent loss of blood, was of a rich creamy white; his nose straight, clear-cut and irreproachable; his firm, red lips disclosed magnificent teeth; and the rest of the body, which, thanks to the fashion then in vogue, was clad to display it to the best advantage, was modelled on the lines of Antinous.

The two young people looked at each other for a moment in silence.

"You heard?" asked Aurélie.

"Alas! yes," replied Coster.

"He will sup with me, and it is your fault."

"How so?"

"You made me open the door."

"And you are vexed because he is to sup with you?"

"Of course!"

"Really?"

"I swear it. I am not in a humor to-night to be amiable to people I do not love."

"But to him whom you love?"

"Ah! for him I would be charming," replied Aurélie.

"And suppose," said Coster, "that I could find a way to prevent his supping with you?"

"And?"

"Who would sup with you in his place?"

"What a question. The man who kept him away."

"And then you would not be cross?"

"Oh, no!"

"Give me a pledge."

The beautiful courtesan held up her cheek to him, and he pressed a kiss upon it. Just then the bell rang again.

"Ah! this time I warn you that if it is he who has taken it into his stupid head to return, I shall go away," said Coster de Saint-Victor.

Suzette appeared.

"Shall I open the door, madame?" she asked timidly.

"Certainly, open it."

Suzette opened it. A man carrying a large flat basket on his head came in, saying: "Supper for citizen Barras."

"You hear?" asked Aurélie.

"Yes," replied the incroyable; "but, on the word of Coster de Saint-Victor, he shall not eat it."

"Shall I set the table just the same?" asked Suzette.

"Yes," said the young man, darting from the room; "for if he does not eat it, some one else will."

Aurélie followed him with her eyes as far as the door, then, when it had closed behind him, she cried: "My toilet, Suzette, and make me look more beautiful than you ever did before."

"And for which of the two does madame wish to look beautiful?"

"I do not know myself; but, in the meantime, make me as beautiful as possible for myself."

We have already described the costume of the fashionable ladies of the day, and Aurélie was one of them. A member of a good family of Provence, and playing the part which we have outlined, we have thought it best to leave her the name by which she was known at the time of which we write, and which appears in the police records. Her story was like that of nearly all the women of her class, for whom the Thermidorean reaction was a triumph. A young girl without fortune, she was led astray by a young nobleman, who induced her to leave her home, and who took her to Paris, then emigrated, enlisted in Condé's army, and was killed. She remained alone without other means of support than her beauty and her youth. Picked up by one of the farmers of the public revenues, she soon regained more luxury than she had lost. But the time came when the office of farmer of the revenue was suppressed. The beautiful Aurélie's protector was one of twenty-seven persons who were executed with Lavoisier on the 8th of May, 1794. At his death he left her a large sum of money, of which she had hitherto used only the interest; so that, without being wealthy, the beautiful Aurélie was beyond the reach of want.

Barras, hearing of her beauty and refinement, called upon her, and, after a suitable probation, was accepted as her lover. He was then a handsome man of forty, belonging to a noble family of Provence—a nobility that has been questioned, although those who remember the old saying, "Old as the rocks of Provence, and noble as the Barras," will not doubt the justice of the claim.

At the age of eighteen, Barras was a subaltern in the regiment of Languedoc, but left it to rejoin his uncle, who was governor of the "Ile de France." He was nearly lost in a shipwreck off the coast of Coromandel; but managing by good luck to seize the helm at the right moment, and showing great presence of mind and sound judgment, he reached an island inhabited by savages, where he and his companions remained a month. They were finally rescued and taken to Pondicherry. He returned to Paris in 1788, where a great future awaited him.

At the time when the States-General assembled, Barras, following Mirabeau's example, showed no hesitation; he presented himself as a candidate for the *Tiers-Etat*, and was accepted. On the 14th of July he was noticed among the crowd that took the Bastille. As a member of the Convention, he voted the death of the king, and was sent to Toulon, after that city was recaptured from the English. His despatch to the Convention is well known.

He proposed simply to demolish Toulon.

When Barras returned to the Convention, he took an active part on all great occasions when the interests of the Revolution were at stake, and he was particularly prominent on the 9th Thermidor. So much so, that, when the new Convention was proposed, he was naturally elected as one of the directors.

We have told his age, and testified as to his personal charm. He was a man about five feet six, with a fine head of hair, which he powdered to conceal his premature grayness. He had remarkably fine eyes, a straight nose, and full lips which set off a sympathetic mouth. Without adopting the exaggerated fashions of the *jeunesse dorée*, he followed them to a degree of elegance suited to his years.

As for the beautiful Aurélie de Saint-Amour, she had just completed her twenty-first year, entering at the same time upon her majority, and the true period of a woman's beauty, which is in our opinion from her twenty-first year to her thirty-fifth. Her disposition was at once extremely refined, extremely sensual, and extremely impressionable. She possessed the attributes of flower, fruit, and woman—perfume, savor, and pleasure.

She was tall, which at first sight made her seem slender, but thanks to the style of dress then in vogue, it was not difficult to see that she was slender after the fashion of Jean Goujon's Diana. She was fair with those deep brown tints which are to be seen in the hair of Titian's Magdalen. When she wore her hair in the Greek style, with bands of blue velvet, she was superb; but when, toward the end of a dinner, she loosened her hair, letting it fall over her shoulders and framing her cheeks in an aureole, enhancing their fresh camilla tints and peachy down-like surface, and contrasting sharply with her black eyebrows, blue eyes, red lips, and pearly teeth, and when a spray of brilliant diamonds hung from each ear—then she was dazzling.

Now this luxuriant beauty had developed only within the last two years. To her first lover, the only man she had ever loved, she had given the young girl, full of hesitations, who yields, but does not entirely surrender herself. Then all at

once she felt the sap of life mounting and growing within her; her eyes opened, her nostrils distended; she exhaled at every pore that love of second youth which succeeds adolescence, which turns its gaze upon herself, and which seeks some object upon which to lavish the pent-up wealth of treasure within. It was then that necessity compelled her to sell rather than to give herself; but even then she looked forward to the time when she should be rich and free to enter upon that liberty of heart and person which is the dignity of every woman.

Two or three times at evening parties at the Hôtel Thélusson, at the Opéra, or at the Comédie Française, she had noticed Coster de Saint-Victor as he paid his court to the most beautiful and distinguished ladies of the period; and each time her heart seemed to leap in her bosom and fly to him. She felt within herself that some day, if she would make advances, this man would belong to her, or rather she to him. And so thoroughly was she convinced of this, that (thanks to the secret voice which oftentimes gives us hints of what the future will bring forth) she was content to wait without much impatience, certain that one day the object of her dreams would pass near enough to her, or she to him, to join them each to each other by the irresistible law that binds steel to magnet.

At last, on the evening when she opened her window to watch the street brawl, she recognized in the thick of the fray the handsome figure which had haunted her solitary nights; and, in spite of herself, she cried out: "Citizen in the green coat, take care!"

CHAPTER XI

ASPASIA'S TOILET

Aurélie de Saint-Amour might very well have called Coster de Saint-Victor by his name, since she had recognized him; but the handsome young man had many rivals, and consequently many enemies, and to utter his name might have given the signal for his death.

Coster on his side, on regaining consciousness, had recognized her; for, celebrated as she already was for her beauty, she was becoming even better known for her charm of manner and wit—that indispensable complement to beauty that desires to be called queen.

Coster found her marvellously beautiful, but he could vie with Barras neither in point of magnificence nor generosity. Charm and beauty stood him instead of fortune, and he often succeeded with tender words where the most powerful men failed with more material means. Coster was acquainted with all the shameful mysteries of Parisian life, and was incapable of sacrificing a woman's position to a moment of egotism and a mere spark of passion.

Perhaps the beautiful Aspasia, now mistress of an independent fortune sufficient to gratify her desires, and which she was sure of increasing with the notoriety she had already acquired, would have preferred less delicacy and more passion on the young man's part. But in any case she wished to appear beautiful, so that he should love her the more if he remained, and regret her doubly if he were obliged to go away. But whatever her motive, Suzette obeyed her to the letter, uniting all the mysteries of her art to the marvels of nature in making her beautiful, to use her mistress's expression, in that same boudoir into which we introduced our readers in the preceding chapter.

The modern Aspasia, about to assume the dress of the Aspasia of antiquity, was lying on the same sofa on which they had placed Coster de Saint-Victor; but its position had been changed. It now stood between a small mantel-shelf covered with Sèvres statuettes, and a Psyche in a round frame forming an immense wreath of roses in Dresden china. Enveloped in a cloud of transparent muslin, Aurélie had abandoned her head to Suzette, who was arranging a Greek coiffure; this fashion had been revived by political reminiscences, and particularly by the pictures of David, who was then at the height of his fame. A narrow, blue velvet ribbon covered with diamond stars was drawn about the forehead, and above the chignon, from which fell little curls so light that the faintest breath sufficed to set them waving.

Thanks to the flowers of youth which bloomed in her face, and the peach-like down of her complexion, Aurélie could afford to dispense with the powders and cosmetics with which women in those days, as well as the present, plastered their faces.

She would indeed have lost by them; for the skin of her breast and throat had reflections like mother-of-pearl and silver, whose rosy freshness would have been destroyed by even the smallest touch of cosmetics. Her arms, molded in alabaster, slightly tinted by the rays of dawning day, harmonized marvellously with her bust. Each detail of her body, in fact, seemed like a defiance of the most beautiful models of antiquity and the Renaissance; only that Nature, that wonderful sculptress, seemed to have blended the severity of antique art with the grace and delicacy of the modern.

This beauty was so genuine that its possessor seemed herself not quite accustomed to it; and every time that Suzette took off an article of clothing, uncovering some new portion of her mistress's body, Aurélie smiled at herself complacently, but without pride.

She would sometimes remain hours lying on her couch in the warm atmosphere of her boudoir, like the Hermaphrodite of Farnese or the Venus of Titian. This admiration of herself, which was shared by Suzette, who could not refrain from looking at her young mistress with the admiring eyes of a young page, was this time shortened by the vibrating chimes of the clock, as well as by Suzette, who now approached with a chemise of that filmy fabric which is woven only in the East.

"Come, mistress," said Suzette, "I know you are beautiful, no one better. But half-past nine has struck. Never mind, your hair is done, and a very little will finish you."

Aurélie shook her shoulders, like a statue removing a veil, and murmured these two questions, addressed to the supreme power which is called Love: "What is he doing now? Will he succeed?"

What Coster de Saint-Victor was doing—for we will not wrong the beautiful Aurélie by implying that she meant Barras—we are about to inform you.

As we have already said, the Feydeau was giving the first representation of "Toberne, or the Swedish Fisherman," preceded by a little one-act opera called "The Good Son." Barras, when he left Mademoiselle de Saint-Amour, had only to cross the Rue des Colonnes. He arrived when the short piece was about half finished, and, as he was well known as one of the members who had most energetically supported the Constitution, and was likely to be one of the members of the future Directory, his entrance was greeted by murmurs and cries of: "Down with the Decrees! Down with the Two-thirds! Long live the Sections!"

The theatre was above all others the theatre of reactionary Paris. However, those who had come to see the play overcame those who wished to disturb it. Cries of "Down with the interrupter!" rose above the others and quiet was restored. The short piece was finished quietly enough. But the curtain had scarcely fallen, when a young man mounted upon an orchestra-chair, and pointing to the bust of Marat which was opposite that of Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau, exclaimed: "Citizens, why do we suffer this monster with a human face, who is called Marat, to pollute this spot, when, in the place which it usurps and defiles, we might see the citizen of Geneva, the illustrious author of 'Emile,' 'The Social Contract,' and 'The New Héloïse'?"

Scarcely had the speaker finished this address, when, from balconies, gallery and pit, a thousand throats took up the cry: "It is he! It is Coster de Saint-Victor! Bravo, Coster, bravo!"

And thirty or more young men from the group which the patrol had dispersed rose and waved their hats and brandished their canes.

Coster drew himself up still higher, and, placing one foot on the back of the stalls, he continued: "Down with the Terrorists! Down with Marat! Down with the bloody monster with three thousand heads! Long live the author of 'Emile,' of 'The Social Contract,' and 'The New Héloïse'!"

Suddenly a voice shouted: "Here is a bust of Jean-Jacques Rousseau!"

Two hands raised the bust above the audience. How did the bust of Rousseau come there just when it was wanted? No one knew; but its appearance was hailed none the less with shouts of enthusiasm.

"Down with the bust of Marat! Long live Charlotte Corday! Down with the Terrorists! Down with the assassin! Long live Rousseau!"

CHAPTER XII

FOR WHICH VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU ARE TO BLAME

This was the manifestation that Coster de Saint-Victor anticipated. He clung to the base of the caryatides which supported the boxes, and pushed, pulled, and assisted by twenty persons, he succeeded in reaching the one occupied by Barras. Barras did not know what the young man wanted, and, although he was not aware of what had passed in Aurélie's apartments, he could not count Coster among his best friends. He therefore pushed back his chair. Coster saw the movement.

"Excuse me, citizen Barras," he said, laughing, "my business is not with you. But I am, like you, a deputy commissioned to dethrone this bust."

And standing upon the railing of the box he struck at the bust with his cane. It tottered, fell to the floor, and crashed into a thousand pieces amid the almost unanimous applause of the audience.

At the same time similar execution was done on the unoffending bust of Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau, who was killed on the 20th of January by the guard of Paris. The same acclamations greeted its fall and destruction. Then two hands raised a bust above the orchestra, saying: "Here is a bust of Voltaire!"

The words were scarcely spoken before the bust flew from hand to hand, and, by a sort of Jacob's ladder, reached the empty niche. Rousseau's bust followed, and the two were installed amid the cries, shouts and acclamations of all present.

But Coster de Saint-Victor, standing upon the railing of Barras's box, waited until silence had fallen. He might have waited for a long time had he not made a motion that he wished to speak. The cries of "Long live the author of 'Emile,' of 'The Social Contract,' and 'The New Héloïse!'" mingled with others of "Long live the author of 'Zaïre,' 'Mahomet,' and the 'Henriade!'" died away and were succeeded by shouts of "Coster wants to speak! Speak, Coster! we are listening. Hush! hush! Silence!" Coster made another sign, and, judging that he could at last make himself heard, he shouted: "Citizens, thank citizen Barras, who is here in the box!"

All eyes were turned upon Barras.

"The illustrious general has been good enough to remind me that the same sacrilege which we have just repaired here exists in the chamber of the Convention. In fact, the two commemorative tablets, representing the death of Marat and citizen Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau, from the pencil of the Terrorist David, are still hanging upon the walls."

A cry burst from every throat: "To the Convention, friends, to the Convention!"

"The excellent citizen Barras will see that the doors are opened for us. Long live citizen Barras!"

And the whole audience, who had hooted Barras earlier in the evening, took up the cheer: "Long live Barras!"

As for Barras himself, bewildered by the part which Coster de Saint-Victor had allotted him in the comedy, a part in which it is needless to say he was a nonentity, he rose, and seizing his hat, cane, and overcoat, hastened from his box and ran downstairs in search of his carriage.

But rapidly as he had made his exit from the theatre, Coster, jumping from balcony to balcony, disappeared behind the curtain with a last cry of "To the Convention!" and reached Aurélie's door before Barras had called his carriage.

Suzette hurried to the door, although she had not recognized the general's ring; perhaps she hurried all the more for that reason, and Coster slipped through the half-open door.

"Hide me in the boudoir, Suzette," said he. "Citizen Barras will be here shortly to tell your mistress that he cannot sup with her. It is I who will sup with your mistress."

Scarcely had he uttered these words when a carriage drew up before the door of the house.

"Here! Quick, quick!" cried Suzette, opening the door of the boudoir. Coster de Saint-Victor darted in just as a hurried step sounded upon the stairs.

"Ah! there you are, citizen-general," said Suzette; "I guessed that it was you, and, as you see, I was holding the door open for you. My mistress is waiting impatiently for you."

"To the Convention! To the Convention!" shouted a band of young men who were passing through the street and striking at the pillars with their sticks.

"Oh! what is the matter?" asked Aurélie, appearing at the door, her color heightened with impatience and uneasiness.

"As you see, dear friend, a riot has occurred which deprives me of the pleasure of supping with you. I have come to tell you of it myself, so that you may not doubt my regret."

"Ah! how unfortunate!" exclaimed Aurélie. "Such a lovely supper."

"And such a sweet companion," added Barras, trying to bring forth a melancholy sigh. "But my duty as a statesman before all."

"To the Convention!" howled the mob.

"Au revoir, sweet friend; as you see, I have not a moment to lose if I am to get there before them." And faithful to his duty, as he said, the future director stopped only long enough to reward Suzette's fidelity by thrusting a handful of assignats in her hand, and then rushed down the stairs.

Suzette shut the door behind him, and as she was bolting and locking it, her mistress called out: "What are you doing?"

"As you see, madame, I am fastening the door."

"And Coster, you wretched girl?"

"Look behind you, madame," said Suzette.

Aurélie looked, and as she looked she uttered a cry of joy and surprise. Coster, who had come out from the boudoir on tiptoe, was standing behind her, with his arm held out to her.

"Citizeness," he said, "will you do me the honor to accept my arm and let me conduct you to the dining-room?"

"But how have you done it? What did you do? What did you devise?"

"I will tell you while we are eating citizen Barras's supper," said Coster de Saint-Victor.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ELEVENTH VENDÉMIAIRE

One of the resolutions passed at the royalist agency in the Rue des Postes, after Cadoudal's departure on the evening to which we have referred, was that a meeting should be held the following evening at the Théâtre of the Odéon.

During the evening, as we have seen, a crowd of men, led by some fifty of the members of the *jeunesse dorée*, had repaired to the hall of the Convention, but their chief, Coster de Saint-Victor, having disappeared as completely as if he had vanished through some trap-door, the mob and the *muscadins* beat in vain against the doors of the Convention, whose members had been forewarned by Barras of the attack which was about to be made upon them.

From an artistic point of view, it would have been a great loss if the two pictures, against which the crowd were so incensed, had been destroyed. "The Death of Marat" was in particular one of David's masterpieces.

But the Convention, seeing the dangers to which it was exposed, and knowing that a fresh crater might burst forth in the volcano of Paris at any moment, declared itself in permanent session. The three representatives—Gillet, Aubry and Delmas—who, since the 4th Prairial, had been in command of the forces, were given authority to take all measures necessary for the safety of the Convention. This was done all the more thoroughly when it was learned, through those who had been present at the preparations for the following day, that there was to be a meeting of armed citizens at the Odéon the following evening, and their anxiety reached a culminating point.

The next day, the 3d of October (11th Vendémiaire), had been set apart for a funeral celebration, to be held in the Hall of Sessions itself, in memory of the Girondins. Several members proposed that the ceremony should be postponed for another day, but Tallien arose and said that it was unworthy of the Convention not to attend to its duties in times of danger even as in times of peace.

In permanent session, the Convention issued a decree ordering all illegal meetings of electors to disperse. The night passed in the midst of uproars which beggar description in all parts of the city. Shots were fired and people were knocked down. Whenever bands of the Sections and the Convention met, blows invariably ensued.

The Sections, on the other hand, in virtue of the rights of sovereignty they had assumed, issued their own decrees. Thus it was as a result of a decree of the Section Le Peletier that the meeting at the Odéon had been set for the 11th Vendémiaire.

Every moment brought in most disastrous news from the towns around Paris where the royalist committee had established its agencies. Risings had occurred at Orléans, Dreux, Verneuil, and Nonancourt. At Chartres, Tellier, the representative, had endeavored to prevent an insurrection, and finding that his efforts were unavailing, he blew out his brains. The Chouans had cut down all the trees planted in honor of the 14th of July—those glorious symbols of the people's triumph. They had hurled the Statue of Liberty into the mud; and in the provinces, as well as in Paris, patriots had been assaulted in the streets.

While the Convention was deliberating against the conspirators, the latter, in their turn, were acting against the Convention. About eleven in the morning the electors began to put in appearance at the Odéon, although only the more adventurous had taken this risk, and had they been counted they would scarcely have comprised a full thousand. In their midst a crowd of young men passed to and fro, shouting, scraping the railings and overturning the seats with their swords. But the number of chasseurs and grenadiers sent by the Sections did not exceed four hundred. More than ten thousand people surrounded the monument, the place of meeting, blocking up the entrances to the hall, and filling the neighboring streets.

If, on that day, the Convention, which was kept fully informed, had but acted with decision, the insurrection could have been suppressed; but once again it resorted to conciliatory measures. They issued a decree declaring the meeting illegal, and specified in one of its articles that all those who should at once disperse would be exempt from punishment. As soon as the decree was issued, some officers of the police, escorted by six dragoons, started from the Tuileries, where the Convention was in session, to command the mob to disperse.

But the streets were crowded with spectators. They wanted to know what the police and the dragoons intended to do; and they impeded them so successfully, that, although they left the palace at three o'clock, it was almost seven before they reached the Odéon, whither they were accompanied by cries, hoots, jeers, and provocations of every sort. From a

distance they could be seen in the Place de l'Égalité opposite the monument, on the backs of their horses; and they looked like ships towering above the crowd and tossed upon a stormy sea.

They finally reached the square. The dragoons drew up before the steps of the theatre; the police officers, intrusted with the proclamation, went up under the portico, and there, lighted by torch-bearers, they read the proclamation.

But at the first words, the doors of the theatre flew open, and the "sovereigns," as the men of the Sections were called, came out at a run, followed by the electoral guards. The police were hurled from the top to the bottom of the steps, and the electoral guards charged the dragoons with fixed bayonets. The police disappeared, swallowed up by the crowd, followed by hooting and jeering; the dragoons dispersed, the torches were extinguished, and from the chaos rose cries of "Long live the Sections! Down with the Convention!"

These cries, passing from street to street, finally reached the ears of the Convention itself. And while the victors re-entered the Sections, and, enthusiastic as men always are after a first success, took oath never to lay down arms until the Tuileries should be destroyed, the patriots, even those who opposed the Convention, realizing the dangers now threatening that liberty of which the Convention was the last tabernacle, hastened in a body to offer their services and to demand arms. Some came from the prisons, while others had been ejected from the Sections. A large number of them were officers whose names had been struck off by the chairman of the war committee. Aubry joined them. The Convention hesitated for some time; but Louvet, that indefatigable patriot who had survived the ruin of all the parties, and who was desirous of reopening the Jacobin Club and of arming the faubourgs, insisted so strenuously that he carried the day.

Then not a minute was lost. They assembled all the unemployed officers and gave them the command of the soldiers, putting them all under the orders of brave General Berruyer.

This occurred on the evening of the 11th, just as word arrived of the rout of the police and the dragoons; and it was determined to clear the Odéon by means of an armed force.

In virtue of this order, General Menou directed a column of troops and two pieces of artillery to proceed from the camp at Sablons. But when they reached the Odéon at eleven o'clock at night, they found the square and the theatre empty and deserted. The whole night was spent in arming the patriots and in receiving defiance after defiance from the Sections Le Peletier, Butte-des-Moulins, Contrat-Social, Comédie-Française, Luxembourg, Rue Poissonnière, Brutus, and Temple.



CHAPTER XIV

THE TWELFTH VENDÉMIAIRE

On the morning of the 12th Vendémiaire, all the walls were covered with posters enjoining the national guards to report at their several Sections, which were threatened by the Terrorists, or, in other words, the Convention.

At nine o'clock in the morning the Section Le Peletier declared its sessions permanent, and proclaimed revolt by beating to arms in all the quarters of Paris. The Convention, exasperated, did likewise. Messengers were sent through the streets to reassure the citizens and to vouch for those to whom arms had been given. The air was filled with those strange thrills which betray the fevers of great cities, and which are the symptoms of great events. It was recognized that, so far as the Sections were concerned, the rebellion had gained such strength that it was no longer a question of reclaiming and convincing them, but of crushing them.

None of the days of the Revolution had yet dawned with such terrible presages—not the 14th of July, nor the 10th of August, nor even the 2d of September.

About eleven o'clock in the morning the Convention felt that the moment for action had arrived. Seeing that the Section Le Peletier was the headquarters, it was resolved to disarm it, and General Menou was ordered to march against it with a sufficient body of troops and artillery.

The general came from Sablons and crossed Paris. But when he reached the city he saw something that he had not suspected; namely, that he was opposing the nobility and the richer citizens, the class which represented public opinion. It was not the faubourgs, as he had supposed, which were to be swept with hot shell, it was the Place Vendôme, the Rue Saint-Honoré, the Boulevards, and the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

The man of the 1st Prairial hesitated on the 12th Vendémiaire. He went on, however, but so reluctantly that the Convention was obliged to send Representative Laporte to urge him on. All Paris was watching this great duel. Unfortunately the Section Le Peletier had for a president the man whom we already know from his interviews with the president of the Convention and the Chouan general; he was as rapid in his decisions as Menou was feeble and hesitating.

Therefore it was already eight o'clock in the evening when General Verdières received orders from General Menou to take sixty grenadiers of the Convention, one hundred of the battalion of the Oise, and twenty horsemen, to form a column on the left side of the Rue des Filles-de-Saint-Thomas, and there to await orders.

Scarcely, however, had he entered the Rue Vivienne than Morgan appeared at the door of the Convent of the Daughters of Saint-Thomas, where the Section Le Peletier was in session, and ordered out a hundred of the Sectional party, commanding them to shoulder arms. Morgan's grenadiers obeyed without hesitation. Verdières gave the same order to his troops, but murmurs of dissent were heard.

"Friends," cried Morgan, "we shall not fire first, but when the fighting has once begun you need expect no quarter from us. If the Convention wants war it shall have it."

Verdières's grenadiers wished to reply, but the general called out: "Silence in the ranks!"

He was obeyed. Then he ordered the cavalry to draw their sabres and the infantry to ground arms. In the meantime the centre column arrived by way of the Rue Vivienne, and the right by the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires.

The entire assembly had been converted into an armed force; a thousand men issued from the convent and formed in the portico. Morgan, sword in hand, placed himself a few steps in advance of the rest.

"Citizens," he said, addressing the Sectionists under his orders, "you are for the most part married men and fathers of families; I am, therefore, responsible for more lives than yours; as much as I should like to return death for death to these human tigers who have guillotined my father and shot my brother, I command you, in the names of your wives and children, not to fire first. But if our enemies fire a single shot—as you see, I am ten feet in front of you—the first who fires from their ranks perishes by my hand."

These words were uttered amid the most profound silence; for before speaking Morgan had raised his sword to impose silence, and neither his own men nor the patriots had lost a syllable of what he said.

Nothing could have been easier than to have replied to these words with a triple volley, the first from the right, the second from the left, and the third from the Rue Vivienne, in which case this would have amounted merely to pure bravado. Exposed like a target to the bullets, Morgan would necessarily have fallen.

The astonishment was great when, instead of the expected volley, Laporte, after consulting with General Menou, advanced toward Morgan, and the general ordered his men to ground arms. The order was promptly obeyed.

But the astonishment increased, when, after exchanging a few words with Laporte, Morgan said: "I am here only to fight, and because I thought there was to be fighting. When it comes to compliments and concessions, the affair passes into the vice-president's hands, and I will retire."

And returning his sword into the scabbard, he withdrew into the crowd, where he was soon lost. The vice-president advanced in his stead. After a conference, which lasted about ten minutes, a portion of the Sectional troops marched off, turning a corner of the convent to regain the Rue Montmartre, and the Republican troops retired to the Palais Royal.

But scarcely had the troops of the Convention disappeared before the Sectional troops, led by Morgan, reappeared, crying with one accord: "Down with the Two-thirds! Down with the Convention!"

This cry, starting at the convent of the Daughters of Saint-Thomas, spread like wild-fire all over Paris. Two or three churches, which had retained their bells, began to sound the tocsin. This sinister sound, which had not been heard for more than four years, produced an effect more terrible than the booming of cannon. It was the coming of a religious and political reaction, wafted as if upon the wings of the wind.

It was eleven o'clock at night when the unwelcome sound, together with word of Menou's advance and its result, reached the hall where the Convention was in session. All the deputies swarmed into the room, questioning each other, and unable to believe that the positive command to surround and disarm the Section Le Peletier had been disobeyed, and converted into a friendly interview at the end of which both parties had gone their ways.

But when tidings came that the party of the Section, instead of dispersing, had retraced their steps, and, from their convent as from a fortress, defied and insulted the Convention, Chénier sprang to the tribune.

Imbittered by the cruel accusation, which followed him as long as he lived, and even beyond the grave, that he had allowed his brother André to be executed through jealousy, Marie-Joseph Chénier always advocated the harshest and most expeditious measures.

"Citizens!" he cried, "I cannot believe what we have just been told. A retreat before the enemy is a misfortune, but retreat before rebels is treason. Before I descend from this tribune I want to know whether the will of the majority of the French people is to be respected, or whether we are to bow before the authority of the Sections—we, the will of the nation. I demand that the government be called to account before the Assembly for what has taken place in Paris."

Shouts of approbation followed this energetic appeal, and Chénier's motion was unanimously agreed to.

CHAPTER XV

THE NIGHT OF THE 12TH AND THE 13TH VENDÉMIAIRE

Delaunay (d'Angers), a member of the government, mounted the tribune to reply in its name.

"Citizens," he said, "I have just been told that the Section Le Peletier is hemmed in on all sides."

Applause greeted these words from all sides; but a voice rang out above them, crying: "That is not true."

"And I tell you," continued Delaunay, "that it is true."

"That is not true," repeated the same voice with still greater firmness. "I have just come from the Section Le Peletier, and I know. Our troops have retreated, and the Sectionists are masters of Paris."

Just then the noise of many cries, footsteps, and vociferations resounded in the corridors. A flood of people swept into the room, terrible and resistless as a tidal wave. The tribunes were invaded; the wave flowed round them. A hundred voices cried in the crowd: "To arms! To arms! To prison with General Menou! We are betrayed."

"I demand," cried Chénier, standing upon his seat, "I demand that General Menou be arrested, that he be tried on the spot, and that, if he be guilty, he be shot in the courtyard."

Shouts of "Arrest General Menou!" redoubled. Chénier continued: "I demand that arms and cartridges be distributed anew to all the patriots who ask for them. I demand that a battalion of patriots be formed that shall assume the name of 'The Holy Battalion of '89,' and that they shall swear to die on the steps of the Assembly rather than yield."

Then, as if they had only awaited this motion, four hundred patriots invaded the hall, demanding arms. They were the veterans of the Revolution—the living history of the past six years; the men who had fought under the walls of the Bastille; who, on the 10th of August, had attacked the same château that they were called upon to defend to-day; men covered with scars, the heroes of Valmy and Jemmapes, proscribed because their daring deeds were attached to obscure names, and because they had vanquished the Prussians without organized tactics, and beaten the Austrians without a knowledge of mathematics or even knowing how to spell. They all accused the aristocratic factions of having driven them out of the army. It was the reactionary Aubry who had torn the swords from their hands and the epaulets from their shoulders.

They kissed the guns and swords which were distributed to them, and pressed them to their hearts, exclaiming: "Then we are free, since we are to die for our country!"

Just then an usher entered to announce a deputation from the Section Le Peletier.

"You see," said Delaunay, "that I knew what I was talking about. They have come to accept the conditions imposed upon them by Menou and Laporte."

The usher went out and returned five minutes later.

"The chief of the deputation asks if he and his companions will be safeguarded while he makes a communication to the Convention," he said.

Boissy d'Anglas raised his hand.

"On the honor of the nation," he said, "those who enter here shall go forth as safe and sound as they enter."

The usher retired with the answer. Profound silence reigned in the Assembly. The deputies still hoped, thanks to this unexpected occurrence, to escape from their dilemma by means of conciliatory measures. The silence was broken by the sound of approaching footsteps. All eyes turned toward the door and a shiver ran through the Assembly.

The same young man who had addressed the Convention on the previous occasion headed the deputation. His bearing showed plainly that he had not come to make submission.

"Citizen president," said Boissy d'Anglas, "you have asked to be heard and we listen to you. You have asked to be safeguarded and we accord that demand. Speak therefore."

"Citizens," said the young man, "I hope that you will refuse the last offers of the Sections, for I wish to fight. The happiest day of my life will be when I enter this hall ankle-deep in blood, with fire and sword in my hand."

A threatening murmur ran along the benches of the Convention; a thrill of wonder passed through the tribunes and the group of patriots who were crowded in the corner of the hall.

"Continue," said Boissy d'Anglas; "swell your threats to insolence. You know that you have nothing to fear and that we have guaranteed you your life and liberty."

"For that reason," continued the young man, "I will tell you in a few words what brings me here. It is the sacrifice of my personal vengeance to the general welfare, even including your own. I thought I had no right to send by another this final summons which I now pronounce to you. If to-morrow, at daybreak, the walls are not covered with notices to the effect that the Convention is dissolved in a body, and that Paris and the rest of France are free to choose their own representatives, without any conditions whatever, we shall consider that you have declared war and shall march against you. You have five thousand men, and we sixty thousand, with right on our side as well." Here he drew out a watch set with brilliants. "It wants a quarter to midnight," he continued; "if within twelve hours, that is to say to-morrow at noon, Paris has not received full satisfaction, the hall which shelters you to-night will be torn down stone by stone, and fire will be set to the four corners of the Tuileries, that the royal dwelling may be purified of your sojourn in it. I have spoken."

A cry of vengeance and menace rang through the hall; the patriots who had just been armed wanted to throw themselves upon the insolent orator; but Boissy d'Anglas stretched out his hand:

"I have pledged your word as well as my own, citizens," he said. "The president of the Section Le Peletier must retire as he came, safe and sound. That is the way we keep our word; we shall see how he keeps his."

"Then it is war!" exclaimed Morgan, with a cry of delight.

"Yes, citizen," replied Boissy d'Anglas, "and civil war, which is the worst of all wars. Go, and never appear before us again, for I could not answer for your safety another time."

Morgan withdrew with a smile on his lips. He took with him what he had come to seek, the certainty of a battle on the following day. Nothing could avert it.

Hardly had he left the hall, however, than a frightful tumult arose.

Midnight struck. The 13th Vendémiaire had begun.

Let us leave the Sections at odds with the Convention, since we still have six or eight hours before war shall blaze out, and let us enter one of those mixed salons which were frequented by men of both parties, and where we can consequently obtain more definite news of the Sections than was possible at the Convention.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SALON OF MADAME DE STAËL, THE SWEDISH AMBASSADRESS

About two-thirds of the way along the Rue du Bac, between the Rue de Grenelle and the Rue de la Plance, stands a massive dwelling which can be recognized to-day by the four Ionic columns which support, two by two, a heavy stone balcony. This was the Swedish embassy, and the celebrated Madame de Staël, daughter of Monsieur de Necker, and wife of the Swedish ambassador, Baron de Staël-Holstein, resided there.

Madame de Staël is so well known that it would perhaps be superfluous to draw her portrait, physical, moral, and intellectual. We will, however, say a few words concerning her. Born in 1766, Madame de Staël was then in the zenith of her genius—we will not say beauty, since she was never beautiful. A passionate admirer of her father, who was only a mediocre man, whatever else may be said for him, she had followed his fortunes, and emigrated with him, although the position of her husband as Swedish ambassador insured her safety.

But she soon returned to Paris, when she drew up a plan for the escape of King Louis XVI., and in 1793 addressed the revolutionary government in the queen's defence, when the latter was brought to trial. Gustavus IV.'s declaration of war with Russia recalled the ambassador to Stockholm, and he was absent from Paris from the day of the queen's death to that of Robespierre's. After the 9th Thermidor, M. de Staël returned to Paris, still as Swedish ambassador, and Madame de Staël, who could not live out of sight of "that gutter of a Rue du Bac," returned with him.

She had but just returned when she opened her salon, where she naturally received all men of distinction, whether they were Frenchmen or foreigners. But, although she had been among the first to espouse the principles of 1789, whether because the voice of reason dictated the course, or the march of events had modified her ideas, she advocated the return of the émigré's with all her might, and so frequently did she ask that their names be erased from the list of the proscribed, particularly that of M. de Narbonne, that the famous butcher Legendre denounced her to the tribune.

Her salon and that of Madame Tallien divided Paris, only Madame de Staël was in favor of a constitutional monarchy, that is to say, something between the Cordeliers and the Girondins.

On this particular evening of the night of the 12th and the 13th Vendémiaire, when the Convention was in the greatest uproar, Madame de Staël's salon was crowded with company. The gathering was very brilliant, and no one, looking at the apparel of the women and the easy carriage of the men would have imagined that people were about to cut each other's throats in the streets of Paris. And yet amid all this gayety and wit, which is never so great in France as in hours of danger, one might have discovered certain clouds, such as summer casts over fields and harvests.

Every new-comer was hailed with bursts of curiosity and eager questioning, which revealed the extent of the interest which the company took in the situation. And then for the moment the two or three ladies who shared the honors with Madame de Staël, either by reason of their wit or beauty, were left alone.

Every one ran to the new-comer, gathered from him whatever he knew, and then returned to his own circle, where the reports were eagerly discussed. By tacit agreement, each lady, who, as we have said, was admitted to the salon by reason of her wit or beauty, held a little court of her own in the reception-room of the Hôtel de Suède; so on this particular evening there was, besides Madame de Staël, Madame de Krüdener and Madame Récamier.

Madame de Krüdener was three years younger than Madame de Staël. She was a Courlandaise, born at Riga, the daughter of a rich landowner, Baron de Witinghof. She married Baron de Krüdener at the age of fourteen, and accompanied him to Copenhagen and Venice, where he filled the rôle of Russian ambassador. Separated from her husband in 1791, she had regained the liberty which had been for a time curtailed by her marriage. She was very charming and very witty, speaking and writing French extremely well. The only thing with which she could have been reproached in that exceedingly unsentimental age, was a strong tendency to solitude and revery. Her melancholy, which was born of the North, and which made her look like a heroine of a Scandinavian saga, lent her a peculiar character in the midst of her surroundings, which tended toward mysticism. Her friends were sometimes angered by a sort of ecstasy which occasionally seized upon her in the midst of a brilliant gathering. But when they drew near her in her inspired moments, and saw her beautiful eyes raised to heaven, they forgot Saint Thérèse in Madame de Krüdener, and the woman of the world in the inspired being. But it was common belief that those beautiful eyes, so often raised to heaven, would deign to regard things earthly the moment that the singer Garat entered the room where she was. A romance which she was then writing, entitled "Valérie, or the Letters of Gustave de Linard to Ernest de G.," was nothing more than the

history of their love.

She was a woman of twenty-five or six, with that light hair peculiar to northern latitudes. In her moments of ecstasy her face assumed a marble-like rigidity of expression, and her skin, as white as satin, gave an appearance of truth to the illusion. Her friends, and she had many, although she had as yet no disciples, said that in her moments of lofty abstraction, and communion with supernatural beings, disconnected words escaped her, which nevertheless, like the Pythonesses of ancient times, had a meaning of their own. In short, Madame de Krüdener was a forerunner of modern spiritualism. In our day she would have been called a "medium." The word not being invented at that time, the world contented itself with calling her inspired.

Madame Récamier, the youngest of all the women of fashion of the day, was born at Lyons, in 1777, and was named Jeanne-Françoise-Adélaïde-Julie Bernard. She married, in 1793, Jacques-Bose Récamier, who was twenty-six years older than she. His fortune was derived from an immense hat factory founded at Lyons by his father. When he was still quite young, he travelled for the house, after receiving a classical education which enabled him to quote either Virgil or Horace when occasion required. He spoke Spanish, for his business had taken him more particularly into Spain. He was handsome, tall, of light complexion, strongly built, easily moved, generous, and light-hearted; and but slightly attached to his friends, although he never refused to lend them money. One of his best friends, whom he had aided pecuniarily many times, died; he merely said with a sigh: "Another money-drawer closed!"

Married during the Terror, he was present at executions even on his wedding-day, just as he had been on the day previous, and would be on the following day. He saw the king and the queen die, together with Lavoisier and the twenty-seven farmers-general; Laborde, his most intimate friend; and, in short, almost all those with whom he had either business or social relations. When asked why he displayed such assiduity in attending the sad spectacle, he replied: "I wish to familiarize myself with the scaffold."

And in fact he escaped being guillotined almost by a miracle. He did, however, escape; and the sort of supernumerary time he had spent with death was of no value to him.

Was it in consequence of this daily contemplation of nothingness that he forgot his wife's beauty, so that he bore her only a paternal affection; or was it one of those imperfections by means of which capricious nature often renders sterile her most beautiful works? Be that as it may, the fact that she was a wife in name only remains a mystery but no secret.

And yet, at the age of sixteen, when Mademoiselle Bernard became his wife, her biographer tells us that she had passed from childhood into the splendor of youth. A supple, elegant figure, shoulders worthy of the Goddess Hebe, a perfectly shaped and exquisitely formed neck, a small red mouth, teeth like pearls, arms which were charming though a little thin, chestnut hair which curled naturally, a nose both regular and delicate, although thoroughly French, a complexion of incomparable brilliancy, a face replete with candor (though at times it sparkled with mischief), whose gentle expression lent it an irresistible charm, a manner at once insolent and proud, the best set head in the world—with all these graces it might most truly have been said of her, as Saint-Simon said of the Duchesse de Bourgogne: "Her bearing was that of a goddess enthroned upon clouds."

The little courts appeared as independent of each other as though they had been held in separate houses; but the principal one, through which the others were reached, was ruled by the mistress of the dwelling. This lady, as we have said, was Madame de Staël, already known in politics through the interests she had brought to bear in order to obtain the appointment of M. de Narbonne as minister of war, and in literature through her enthusiastic letters concerning Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

She was not beautiful, and yet it would have been impossible to pass her unnoticed, or to come in contact with her without realizing that hers was one of those natures which sow words upon the field of thought as a laborer sows his grain in the furrows. This evening she wore a dress of red velvet, opening at the sides over a petticoat of straw-colored satin; she had on a turban of straw-colored satin with a bird of paradise, and she was nibbling a sprig of flowering heather between her thick lips, which nevertheless disclosed beautiful teeth. Her nose was somewhat too strong, and her cheeks too tanned, but her eyes, eyebrows and forehead were wonderfully beautiful. Matter or divinity, there was power there.

Standing with her back to the mantel, with one hand leaning upon it, while she gesticulated with the other like a man, and still holding the heather from which she now and then bit off a piece with her teeth, she was talking to a young man, her ardent adorer, whose fair, curly hair shaded his face and fell almost to his shoulders.

"No, you are mistaken, my dear Constant. No, I am not against the Republic. Quite on the contrary, those who know me

know with what ardor I adopted the principles of '89. But I have a horror of sans-culottism, and vulgar loves. As soon as it became apparent that Liberty, instead of being the most chaste and beautiful of women, was a mere vulgar courtesan who passed from Marat's arms to those of Danton, and thence to Robespierre's, my respect for her ceased. Let there be no more princes, no more dukes, no more counts, no more marquises; I am perfectly willing. Citizen is a fine title when it is addressed to Cato; citizeness is even more noble when Cornelia is its object. But to be on intimate terms with my laundress, and to talk familiarly with my coachman, is more than I can agree to. Equality is a fine thing, but the word equality needs to be defined. If it signifies that education must be equal for all at the expense of the government, then it is most excellent; that all men shall be equal before the law, still more excellent. But if it means that all French citizens shall be of the same height, cut, and physical appearance, then it becomes the law of Procrustes, and not a proclamation of the rights of man. If I had to choose between the law of Lycurgus and that of Solon, between Sparta and Athens, I should choose Athens, and, furthermore, the Athens of Pericles, and not that of Pisistratus."

"Well!" replied the handsome young man to whom this social sally was addressed, with his witty smile, and who was none other than Benjamin Constant, "you would be wrong, for you would choose Athens in her decline, and not at her rise."

"Her decline? With Pericles? It seems to me that on the contrary I choose her in all her splendor."

"Yes; but, madame, nothing begins with splendor. Splendor is the fruit which is preceded by the buds, the flowers, and the leaves. You will have none of Pisistratus, and you are wrong. It was he who, in placing himself at the head of the poorer classes, prepared the future greatness of Athens. As for his two sons, Hipparchus and Hippias, I abandon them to you. But Alcisthenes, who increased the number of senators to five hundred, as our Convention has just done, began the period of the great Persian wars. Miltiades defeated the Persians at Marathon; Pichegru has just conquered the Prussians and the Austrians. Themistocles destroyed the Persian fleet at Salamis; Moreau has just captured the Dutch fleet by a cavalry charge. It is even more original. The liberty of Greece sprang from the very wars which seemed to threaten her with inevitable destruction, as ours has from our war with foreign powers. Then it was that the privileges were extended; then it was that the archons and magistrates were chosen from all classes irrespective of degree. Moreover, you forget that Æschylus was born during this fertile period. Illuminated by the unconscious divination of power, he created the character of Prometheus; or, in other words, the revolt of man against tyranny—Æschylus, the younger brother of Homer, who seems nevertheless the elder."

"Bravo! bravo!" said a voice. "You are strong in literature, upon my word. But in the meantime they are cutting one another's throats in the Section Le Peletier and the Quartier Feydeau. There, just hear the bells! They have returned from Rome."

"Ah! is it you, Barbé-Marbois," said Madame de Staël, addressing a man in the forties, very handsome, but with the pomposity and vapidness which is so often met with in palaces and among diplomats—a very honest man for all that, and the son-in-law of William Moore, the president and governor of Pennsylvania. "Where do you come from?"

"Straight from the Convention."

"And what are they doing there?"

"Arguing. They have outlawed the Sectionists and are arming the patriots. As for the Sectionists, they have already found the bells, which proves that they are monarchists in disguise. To-morrow they will find their guns, and then there will be a fine rumpus."

"What can you expect?" asked a man with straight hair, hollow temples, livid skin, and a crooked mouth; a man who was ugly with the twofold ugliness of man and beast. "I kept telling them at the Convention, 'As long as you do not have an organized police and a minister of police—one who is not only appointed to the office but fitted for it—things will go to the devil.' Well, I who have a dozen fellows under me for the pleasure of it—I who am an amateur policeman because I like the business—I am better informed than they."

"And what do you know, Monsieur Fouché?" asked Madame de Staël.

"Faith, madame, I know that the Chouans have been convoked from all parts of the kingdom, and that the day before yesterday, at Lemaistre's house—you know Lemaistre, baroness?"

"Is he not the agent of the princes?"

"That's the man. Well, the Jura and the Morbihan shook hands there."

"Which means—?" asked Barbé-Marbois.

"Which means that Cadoudal renewed his vow of fidelity, and the Count de Sainte-Hermine his oath of vengeance."

The other salons had diverged toward the first one, and were gathering around the new-comers who brought the news which we have already heard.

"We know who Cadoudal is," replied Madame de Staël. "He is a Chouan, who, after fighting in the Vendée, has crossed the Loire; but who is this Comte de Sainte-Hermine?"

"The Comte de Sainte-Hermine is a young noble who belongs to one of the best families of the Jura. He is the second of three sons. His father was guillotined, his mother died of grief, his brother was shot at Auenheim, and he has sworn to avenge his father and his brother. The mysterious president of the Section Le Peletier, the famous Morgan who insulted the Convention in its own hall of assembly, do you know who he is?"

"No."

"Well, he is the man."

"Really, Monsieur Fouché," said Benjamin Constant, "you have missed your vocation. You ought to be neither priest, sailor, deputy, nor representative; you should be minister of police."

"And if I were," replied Fouché, "Paris would be quieter than it is now. I ask you, is it not perfectly absurd to quail before the Sections? Menou ought to be shot."

"Citizen," said Madame Krüdener, who affected republican forms of speech, "here is citizen Garat; he has just come in, and perhaps he can give us some news. Garat, what do you know?" And she drew into the circle a man of thirty-three or four, elegantly dressed.

"He knows that one minim is worth two crotchets," said Benjamin Constant, mockingly.

Garat rose on the tips of his toes to discover the author of this joke at his expense. He was strong on minims, a matchless singer, and, furthermore, one of the most perfect incroyables that the witty pencil of Horace Vernet has bequeathed to us. He was a nephew of the Conventional Garat, who wept as he read Louis XVI.'s sentence of death. Son of a distinguished lawyer, his father wished to make a lawyer of him, but nature and education produced a singer; for the former had endowed him with one of the most beautiful voices the world has ever heard.

An Italian named Lamberti, together with François Beck, the director of the theatre at Bordeaux, gave him music lessons; which inspired him with such a passion for music that when he was sent to Paris to take a course in law he took a course in singing instead. When his father heard of this he stopped his allowance. The Comte d'Artois then appointed him his private secretary, and had him sing before Marie-Antoinette, who immediately admitted him to her private concerts.

Garat thus became completely estranged from his father, for nothing will estrange father and son quicker than the withdrawal of the latter's allowance. The Comte d'Artois intending to visit Bordeaux, he suggested that Garat accompany him. The latter hesitated at first, but the desire to let his father see him in his new position induced him to go. At Bordeaux he found his old master Beck in penury, and he arranged a concert for his benefit. Curiosity to hear a man from their own department, who had already attained fame as a singer, prevailed, and the people of Bordeaux flocked to hear him. The receipts were enormous, and Garat's success was so great that his father, who was present, left his place and threw himself in his son's arms. In consequence of this amend, *coram populo*, Garat forgave him.

Garat remained an amateur until the beginning of the Revolution; but the loss of his fortune compelled him to become a professional artist. In 1793 he started for England, but the vessel in which he sailed, driven by contrary winds, landed him at Hamburg instead. Seven or eight concerts, which were attended with great success, enabled him to return to France with a thousand louis, which were each worth seven or eight hundred francs in paper money. Upon his return he met Madame Krüdener, and became intimate with her.

The Thermidorean reaction adopted Garat, and there was not, at the time of which we are speaking, a great concert, a brilliant gathering, or an elegant exhibition, at which he did not figure as the foremost of the artists, singers or invited guests. This good fortune made Garat very susceptible, as we have seen, and there was nothing astonishing in the fact that he looked about him to see who had declared that his musical knowledge was limited to the incontrovertible fact that one minim is worth two crotchets. It must be remembered that it was Benjamin Constant, another incroyable, not less susceptible than Garat upon the point of honor, who had spoken.

"Look no further, citizen," said he, holding out his hand; "it is I who advanced that daring opinion. If you do know anything else tell it to us."

Garat pressed the hand as frankly as it had been offered.

"Faith, no," he said; "I have just come from Cléry Hall. My carriage could not pass the Pont-Neuf, which was guarded, so I was obliged to get here by the quays, where the drums are making a devil of a noise. I crossed the Pont Égalité. It is raining in torrents. Mesdames Todi and Mara sang, exquisitely, three or four selections from Gluck and Cimarosa."

"What did I tell you?" asked Benjamin Constant.

"Is it indeed drums that we hear?" asked a voice.

"Yes," replied Garat, "but they are relaxed by the rain, and nothing is more lugubrious than the sound of wet drums."

"Ah! here is Boissy d'Anglas," exclaimed Madame de Staël. "He has probably come from the Convention, unless he has resigned his position as president."

"Yes, baroness," said Boissy d'Anglas, with his melancholy smile, "I have come from the Convention; and I wish I could bring you better news."

"Good!" said Barbé-Marbois, "another Prairial?"

"If that were all," sighed Boissy d'Anglas.

"What is it, then?"

"Unless I am much mistaken, all Paris will be in flames to-morrow. And this time it is indeed civil war. The Section Le Peletier replied to our last summons that 'The Convention has five thousand men, and the Sections sixty thousand; we will give the Conventionals until daybreak to-morrow to vacate the hall of sessions. If it is not done by that time we will drive you out.'"

"And what do you intend to do, gentlemen?" asked Madame-Récamier, in her soft and charming voice.

"Why, madame," replied Boissy d'Anglas, "we intend to emulate the Roman senators when the Gauls invaded the Capitol; we shall die at our posts."

"Would it be possible to see that?" asked M. Récamier with the utmost self-possession. "I have seen the Convention massacred by piecemeal, and I should like to see it done in a body."

"Be there to-morrow about one o'clock," replied Boissy d'Anglas, with the same imperturbable calm. "That is probably when the struggle will begin."

"Oh, not at all," cried a new arrival; "you will not secure the glory of martyrdom for yourselves, you are saved."

"Come, no pleasantries, Saint-Victor," said Madame de Staël to the last speaker.

"Madame, I never jest," said Coster de Saint-Victor, greeting Madame de Staël, Madame de Krüdener, and Madame Récamier with a comprehensive bow.

"But what is the news? What do you mean by this universal salvation?" asked Benjamin Constant.

"The news, ladies and gentlemen—I beg pardon, citizens and citizenesses—is that, in accordance with a proposition of the citizen Merlin of Douai, the National Convention has just decreed that Brigadier-General Barras is to be appointed commander of the armed forces, in reward for his services in Thermidor. It is true he cannot make long speeches, but he excels in the construction of short, but vehement and energetic phrases. Do you not see that since General Barras is to defend the Convention, the Convention is saved? And now that I have done my duty in reassuring you, baroness, I am going home to make my preparations."

"For what?" asked Madame de Staël.

"To fight against him to-morrow, madame, and right willingly too."

"Then you are a royalist, Coster?"

"Why, yes," replied the young man; "I find that there are more pretty women in that party than in the others. And then—and then—then I have other reasons which are known only to myself."

And bowing a second time with his accustomed elegance, he went out, leaving everybody to comment upon the news he had brought, and which, it is needless to say, did not completely reassure them, Coster de Saint-Victor notwithstanding. But as the tocsin was ringing ever louder and louder, as the drums continued to beat, and the rain was still falling, there was no hope of further news, and as the bronze clock representing Marius among the ruins of Carthage was chiming the hour of four, they called their carriages, and went away, secretly uneasy, but outwardly confident.

CHAPTER XVII

THE HOTEL OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN

As Coster de Saint-Victor had announced, Barras had been appointed about one o'clock in the morning commander of the forces within and without Paris, and all civil and military authorities were placed under his orders.

This choice did not deserve Coster de Saint-Victor's derision. Barras was brave, cool, and devoted to the cause of liberty, and at Toulon he had given irrefutable proofs of his bravery and patriotism. He did not deceive himself in regard to the danger of the situation, and the terrible responsibility which rested upon his shoulders. Nevertheless, he remained perfectly calm. Even while pushing his appointment with all his might, he had known of an auxiliary, unknown to all others, upon whom he could rely.

He therefore left the Tuileries immediately after his nomination, attired in a long dark overcoat, and hesitated a moment whether to take a carriage or not; but thinking that a carriage would attract notice and might be stopped, he drew a large pair of pistols from his pocket, and contented himself with securing them in his deputy's sash beneath his overcoat. Then he set off on foot through the Echelle wicket. He went along the Rue Traversière, passed the Palais Royal, followed the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs for a few steps, and found himself opposite the Rue des Fosses-Montmartre. It had been pouring in torrents during all this time.

Everything was in frightful confusion, a fact of which Barras was well aware. He knew that the artillery was still in the camp at Sablons, and that it was guarded by one hundred and fifty men only. He also knew that there were only eighty thousand cartridges in the magazine, and that there were no provisions and no brandy. He knew that all communication with the staff, who had their headquarters on the Boulevard des Capucines, was cut off by the Sectionists of the Club Le Peletier, who had extended their line of sentinels from the Rue des Filles de Saint-Thomas as far as the Rue Saint-Pierre-Montmartre and the Place Vendôme. He was aware of the exasperated pride of the Sectionists, who, as we have seen, had raised the standard of revolt; he knew of the expedition of the preceding day, so shamefully conducted by Menou, and so vigorously received by Morgan, which had doubled their actual strength and quadrupled their moral strength.

On all sides the report was rife that this Section, hemmed in by thirty thousand Conventionals, had overawed them by their courage, and had repulsed them, and forced them to shameful retreat by the skilful disposition of their troops.

Every one spoke of the audacity which Morgan had displayed in placing himself between the two troops, of his lofty air, and that hauteur with which he had addressed General Menou and Representative Laporte. It was whispered, but whispered with the greatest precautions, that he was a great personage, a very great personage, who had only returned to Paris some three or four days before, bearing letters of the highest recommendation to the royalist committees in Paris from the royalist committees in London.

The Convention was already no longer hated; it was despised. And, in truth, what had the Sections to fear from it, spared because of its weakness? They had united during the night of the 11th, and on the 12th had sent detachments to support the Mother Section. They therefore felt that the National Convention would be annihilated, and were prepared to sing the *De Profundis* over its corpse.

Thus, on his way across Paris, Barras was constantly confronted by one or another of those Sections which had come to the assistance of the Mother Section, and who accosted him thus: "Who goes there?"

To which he replied: "A Sectionist."

At every few steps he met a drummer beating a mournful recall or general on his relaxed drum, the lugubrious and sinister sound of his mournful performance being better suited to a funeral procession than to their actual purpose. Furthermore, men were seen gliding through the streets like shadows, knocking at doors, and calling upon other men to arm and repair to the Sections to defend their wives and children, whose throats the Terrorists had sworn to cut. Perhaps these attempts would have been less successful in broad daylight; but the mystery which clings to deeds of the night, entreaties in low tones, as if in fear lest assassins should overhear the whispered communication, the mournful and incessant beating of the drums and the ringing of the bells—all this caused anxiety and trepidation throughout the city, and foretold something indefinite but terrible that was impending.

Barras saw and heard all that. He was no longer judging of the city from mere reports; he was feeling its pulse with his

own finger. Thus when he left the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, he hastened his steps almost to a run as he fled across the Place des Victoires; then gliding along the Rue Fosses-Montmartre, keeping in the shadow of the houses, he finally reached the door of the little hotel of "The Rights of Man." Having gone thus far, he stopped and took a few steps backward, in order to read the sign which he sought by the fitful light of the lamp; after which, approaching the door, he rapped vigorously with the knocker.

A man-servant was in attendance, and he, probably judging from the vigorous knocking that some one of importance was without, did not keep him waiting long. The door opened cautiously.

Barras slipped through the opening and shut the door behind him. Then, without waiting to enlighten the servant as to the cause of all these precautions, he asked: "Citizen Bonaparte lodges here, does he not?"

"Yes, citizen."

"Is he at home?"

"He returned about an hour ago."

"Where is his room?"

"No. 47, on the fourth floor at the end of the corridor."

"Right or left?"

"Left."

"Thanks."

Barras hastened up the stairs, soon reaching the top of the four flights, took the corridor to the left, and stopped before the door of No. 47. Once there, he knocked three times.

"Come in," said a curt voice, which seemed made to command.

Barras turned the handle and entered. He found himself in a room furnished with a curtainless bed, two tables, one large and the other small, four chairs and a globe. A sword and a pair of pistols hung on the wall. A young man, completely dressed, except for his uniform, was seated at the smaller of the two tables, studying a plan of Paris by the light of the lamp.

At the sound of the opening door, the occupant of the room turned half-way around in his chair to see who the unexpected visitor, who came at such an hour, could be. As he sat thus the lamp lighted three-quarters of his face, leaving the rest in shade.

He was about twenty-three or four, with an olive complexion, somewhat lighter at the temples and forehead. His straight black hair was parted in the middle and fell down below his ears. His eagle eye, straight nose and strong chin and lower jaw, increasing in size as it approached his ears, left no doubt as to the trend of his abilities. He was a man of war, belonging to the race of conquerors. Seen thus, and lighted in this way, his face looked like a bronze medallion. He was so thin that all the bones in his face were plainly discernible.

CHAPTER XVIII

CITIZEN BONAPARTE

Barras closed the door and stepped within the circle of light cast by the lamp. Then only did the young man recognize him.

"Ah! is it you, citizen Barras?" he asked without rising.

Barras shook himself, for he was drenched, and tossed his dripping hat upon a chair. The young man continued to watch him attentively.

"Yes, it is I, citizen Bonaparte," said he.

"What wind has blown you to the poor soldier's cell at this hour. A mistral or a sirocco?"

"Mistral, my dear Bonaparte; a mistral of the most violent kind."

The young man gave a dry, harsh laugh, which showed his small, sharp, white teeth.

"I know something about it," he said. "I took a walk through Paris this evening."

"And what is your opinion?"

"It is that, as the Section Le Peletier intimated to the Convention, the storm will burst to-morrow."

"And what were you doing in the meantime?"

The young man rose, and pointing with his index finger to the map on the table, he said: "As you see, I was amusing myself by planning what I would do if I, instead of that imbecile Menou, were general of the interior, in order to put an end to all these talkers."

"And what would you do?"

"I would try to secure a dozen cannon which would talk louder than they."

"Did you not tell me one day at Toulon that you had witnessed the rising of the 20th of June from the terrace beside the ornamental waters?"

The young man shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"Yes," he said, "I saw your poor King Louis XVI. put on the red cap, which did not prevent his head from falling, and which only disgraced it. And I even said to Bourrienne, who was with me that day, 'How could they admit that rabble to the château? They should have swept four or five hundred out with cannon, the rest would have run out of themselves.'"

"Unfortunately," resumed Barras, "to-day there are five thousand instead of five hundred to be swept out."

The young man smiled carelessly.

"A difference of number, that is all," he replied; "but what ultimate difference, so long as the result is the same? The rest is a mere matter of detail."

"So much so that you were defeating the insurgents when I came in?"

"I was making the endeavor."

"And you had your plan laid out?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"That depends. How many soldiers can you call upon?"

"Five or six thousand, including the Holy Battalion of Patriots."

"With that number it is useless to think of attacking forty-five or fifty thousand in the streets. I tell you that plainly."

"Would you evacuate Paris?"

"No, but I would convert the Convention into an intrenched camp. I would await the attack of the Sections, and I would annihilate them in the Rue Saint-Honoré, the Place du Palais-Royal, and along the quays and the bridges."

"Well," said Barras, "I will adopt your plan. Will you attend to the execution of it?"

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"In what capacity?"

"As second general of the interior."

"And who is to be general-in-chief?"

"General-in-chief?"

"Yes."

"Citizen Barras."

"Then I accept," said the young man, holding out his hand, "but on one condition."

"What, you are making conditions?"

"Why not?"

"Go on."

"If we succeed, and order is restored by to-morrow evening, I can count upon you if war is declared with Austria, can I not?"

"If we succeed to-morrow, in the first place you shall have all the glory, and I shall ask the chief command of the Armies of the Rhine and the Moselle for you."

Bonaparte shook his head. "I will go neither to Holland nor to Germany," he said.

"Why not?"

"Because there is nothing to be done there."

"Where do you wish to go?"

"To Italy. It is only in Italy, on the battlefields of Hannibal, Marius and Cæsar that there is anything to be done."

"If there is war in Italy you shall be placed in charge of it, I give you my word of that."

"Thank you. And now let us think of to-morrow. There is no time to lose."

Barras drew out his watch and looked at it.

"I should think not," he said; "it is already three o'clock in the morning."

"How many cannon have you at the Tuileries?"

"Six four-pounders, but no gunners."

"They can be found. Bronze is scarcer than flesh. How many rounds can be fired?"

"Oh! eighty thousand at the outside."

"Eighty thousand—just enough to kill eighty men, supposing that one shot out of a thousand does execution. Luckily we still have three hours of darkness left to us. We must have all the guns brought from the camp at Sablons, so that, in the first place, the enemy cannot seize them, and then because we need them ourselves. We must take enough men from the gendarmerie and from the battalion of '89 to man the guns, and we must send for at least a million cartridges from Meudon and Marly. Finally we must find officers upon whom we can depend."

"We have all those who were deposed by Aubry and who have enlisted in the Holy Battalion."

"Splendid! They are men of action rather than intelligence, and that is what we need." And the young officer rose, buckled on his sword, buttoned his coat, and blew out his light, murmuring, "Oh! Fortune, Fortune! do I at last hold you within my grasp?"

The two men went out and directed their steps toward the Convention. Barras noticed that the young man did not lock his door, which showed that he had nothing of value to lose.

Five hours later—that is to say, at eight in the morning—this is what the two officers had accomplished.

They reached the camp at Sablons in time to bring the artillery to Paris. They established a manufactory of cartridges at Meudon. They planted guns at every avenue, and masked batteries were erected in the event of any of the outlets being carried. A battery, consisting of two eight-pounders and two howitzers, was erected on the Place du Carrousel to cover the columns and to fire on the windows of the houses from which weapons could be brought to bear upon the place.

General Verdier commanded at the Palais National. Means of subsistence for the Convention and its soldiers were thus assured for four or five days in case of blockade. Guns and troops were stationed in and around the building occupied by the Convention—in the cul-de-sac of the Dauphin, in the Rues de Rohan and Saint-Nicaise, at the Palais-Égalité, at the Pont de la Révolution, and the Place Vendôme. A small body of cavalry and two thousand infantry were kept in reserve at the Carrousel and in the garden of the Tuileries.

Thus this great Convention of France, which had overturned a monarchy that had endured for centuries; which had made every throne in Europe tremble; which had driven the English from Holland, and the Austrians and the Prussians from Champagne and Alsace; which had driven the Spanish troops one hundred and eighty miles beyond the Pyrenees, and destroyed the two Vendées—this great Convention of France, which had just united Belgium, Nice, Savoy, and Luxemburg to France, whose armies, passing like a whirlwind through Europe, had leaped the Rhine as though it had been a brook, and threatened to pursue the eagle of Hapsburg to Vienna; this National Convention possessed nothing in Paris but the banks of the Seine, from the Rue Dauphine to the Rue du Bac, and only those parts of the city on the other side of the river which were included between the Place de la Révolution and the Place des Victoires; and to defend itself against all Paris it had only five thousand men and a general who was almost unknown.

CHAPTER XIX

CITIZEN GARAT

On several points, and particularly along the Pont-Neuf, the sentinels of the Sections and those of the Convention were so near to one another that they could easily talk together.

A few unimportant skirmishes occurred during the morning. The Section Poissonnière stopped the men and the guns who were on their way to the Section Quinze-Vingts. That of Mont-Blanc captured a convoy of provisions intended for the Tuileries. A detachment from the Section Le Peletier took possession of the bank. And finally Morgan, with a corps of five hundred men, almost all émigrés or Chouans, all wearing collars and pompons of green, advanced toward the Pont-Neuf, while the Section of the Comédie-Française descended by way of the Rue Dauphine.

About four o'clock in the afternoon nearly fifty thousand men surrounded the Convention. It seemed as though gusts of fierce breath and furious menace could be felt in the air. During the day the Conventional party held several parleys with the Sectionists. Both sides were feeling their opponent's pulse. For example, toward noon, Representative Garat was directed to carry a decree from the Convention to the Section de l'Indivisibilité. He took an escort of thirty horsemen, fifteen chasseurs and fifteen dragoons. The battalions of the Museum and the French guards, which had joined the Convention, and which were stationed in and about the Louvre, presented arms when he appeared.

As for the Pont-Neuf, it was guarded by Republicans, under the command of that same General Cartaux who had been Bonaparte's superior officer at Toulon, and who was not much surprised to find the positions reversed. At the Pont du Change, Garat found a battalion of Sectionists who stopped him. But Garat was a man of action. He drew his pistol and commanded the thirty men to unsheath their swords. At sight of the pistols and the naked steel, the Sectionists let them pass.

Garat was charged with the task of winning the adherence of the Section de l'Invisibilité to the Convention. But despite his persuasions, it persisted in its determination to remain neutral. Garat's next duty was to ascertain whether the battalions of Montreuil and Popincourt intended to support the Sections or the Convention; he therefore made his way to the faubourg. At the entrance of the main street he found the battalion of Montreuil under arms. At sight of him, they shouted with one accord: "Long live the Convention!"

Garat wanted to take the battalion back with him, but they were waiting for Popincourt's force, which had also declared for the Convention. They told him, however, that two hundred men of the Quinze-Vingts Section had remained behind, and were desirous of going to the assistance of the Convention. Garat learned where they were, and went to them to question them.

"March at our head," they said, "and we will follow you."

Garat put his fifteen dragoons at their head and his fifteen chasseurs in the rear, and marched in front of the little troop, pistol in hand; and the two hundred men, of whom only fifty were armed, started for the Tuileries. They passed before the Montreuil battalion; the Popincourts had not arrived as yet. The Montreuils wished to march with them, but their commander demanded an order from Barras. Upon his return to the Tuileries, Garat sent him one by an aide-de-camp. The battalion started at once and arrived in time to take part in the action.

Meantime, Cartaux had assumed command of the detachment with which he was to defend the Pont-Neuf. He had only three hundred and fifty men and two pieces of artillery. He sent word to Bonaparte that he could not hold the position with so small a force.

For reply he received the following, in an almost illegible scrawl:

You will hold out to the last extremity.—BONAPARTE.

This was the first written order ever given by the young general; it is a good example of his concise style.

But about two o'clock in the afternoon, a column of a thousand or twelve hundred men, composed of Sectionists of the Unité and the Fontaine-de-Grenelle, advanced upon that part of the Pont-Neuf contiguous to the Rue Dauphine. There it was stopped by a military outpost. Then one of the Sectionists, carrying a magnificent bouquet, tied with tri-colored ribbon, came forward from the ranks. Cartaux sent an aide-de-camp to forbid the column to advance unless they could

show an order from the Committee of Public Safety or from General-in-chief Barras.

The aide-de-camp returned, accompanied by the commander of the Unité, who declared, in the name of the two Sections, that he bore the olive-branch and wished to fraternize with the general and the troops under his orders.

"Go and tell your president," said Cartaux, "that it is not to me, but to the National Convention that you should carry your olive-branch. Let a deputation of four unarmed men be selected, and I will have them conducted in safety to the Convention, which alone can receive this symbol of peace and fraternity."

This was not the reply that the leader expected to receive; he therefore replied that, after deliberation, they would return again in a still more fraternal manner. Thereupon the leader retired, and the two Sections were shortly after drawn up in line of battle along the Quai Conti and Quai Malaquais. This disposal of forces denoted hostile intentions which soon became evident.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, Cartaux saw a column advancing along the Rue de la Monnaie, of such strength that its front filled the entire street; and, although he was standing on the highest point of the Pont-Neuf, he could not see the end of it. A third column arrived at the same time by the Quai de la Ferraille, while a fourth filed behind the others to cut off the Pont-Neuf by the Quai de l'École.

Notwithstanding the order which he had received to hold the position to the last extremity, General Cartaux saw clearly that he had not a moment to lose if he wished to retire safely without betraying his weakness to the enemy. The gunners immediately received the order to limber up. Two companies led the way as far as the garden of the Infanta, followed by the two guns.

The remainder of the troop was divided into four companies; one facing the Sectionists, who were advancing along the Rue de la Monnaie; another threatening the column on the Quai de la Ferraille, and the others covering the retreat of the artillery. The column of the Pont-Neuf remained in the centre to arrest the column of the Unité, and to mask the manœuvre.

Scarcely had Cartaux taken up his position in the garden of the Infanta, than he recalled the two companies who were facing the Rue de la Monnaie and the Quai de la Ferraille, together with the cavalry. The movement was executed in splendid order, but the Sectionists immediately occupied the abandoned post.

In the meantime Garat returned with his fifteen chasseurs, fifteen dragoons, and the two hundred and fifty men of the Section of the Quinze-Vingts, of which only fifty were armed. The Pont-Neuf bristled with bayonets. He thought they belonged to the Republicans whom he had left on guard there. But once in their midst he realized, from their green collars and pompons, that he had to do not only with Sectionists, but with Chouans. At that moment the commander of the Sectionists, who was none other than Morgan, advanced toward him, and recognized in him one of the men whom he had seen at the Convention.

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur Garat," said he, taking off his hat, "but you seem to be in some trouble, and I should like to assist you if possible. What can I do for you?"

Garat recognized him also, and immediately saw through the jest. But preferring to adopt another tone, he drew his pistol, and, cocking it, said: "Monsieur, I want a passage for myself and my men."

But Morgan continued, still in the same jesting tone: "Nothing could be more reasonable, and indeed we owe it to you, if only for General Cartaux's civility in yielding this post to us without a struggle. But uncock your pistol. Misfortunes happen so easily! Suppose it went off by accident; my men would think you had fired upon me, and they would cut you to pieces, you and your little troop, which is only half armed as it is. That would displease me greatly, as people would say that we had taken advantage of our superior numbers."

Garat uncocked his pistol.

"But why are you here, anyway?" he asked.

"As you see," said Morgan, with a laugh, "we have come to help the Convention."

"Commander," said Garat, jokingly, "you must admit that you have a strange way of helping people."

"Come, I see you do not believe me," said Morgan, "and that I must tell you the truth. Well, then, there are a hundred thousand of us in Paris, and a million in France. Is that not so, Coster?"

The young muscadin whom he addressed, and who was armed to the teeth, contented himself with a nod, accompanied by

the single word: "More!"

"You see," said Morgan, "my friend here, Coster de Saint-Victor, who is a man of honor, confirms what I have just told you. Well, we are more than a hundred thousand strong in Paris, and more than a million strong in France, and we have sworn to exterminate the Conventionals, to destroy the building in which the king's death-warrant was signed, and whence so many death-warrants, like flights of ill-omened birds, have issued. Not only shall the men be punished, but the expiation must extend to the very stones. To-morrow not a member of the Convention will be alive; not a stone will remain standing in the building where the Convention sits. We shall sow the place where it stood with salt, and the ground on which it was built shall be handed over to the execration of posterity."

"If you are so sure of the results of the day, commander," said Garat, resuming his jesting tone, "it ought to make little difference to you whether you have two hundred men more or less to fight against."

"No difference at all," replied Morgan.

"In that case, I ask you for the second time to let me pass. I prefer to die with my colleagues, and to find a tomb in this building which you are going to bring down upon our heads."

"Then dismount from your horse, give me your arm, and let us go first. Gentlemen," continued Morgan, addressing his men with that inflection of the voice which, without suggesting the incroyable, betrayed the aristocrat, "let us play fair. Citizen Garat asks to be allowed to go to the defence of the Convention with his two hundred and fifty men, of whom only fifty are armed. His request seems to me to be so reasonable, and the poor Convention is in such sore straits, that I do not think we ought to oppose his kindly sentiments."

Bursts of ironical laughter welcomed this motion, which did not need to be put to the vote to be passed. A clear path was made at once, and, with Morgan and Garat at their head, the little column advanced.

"A pleasant journey!" cried Coster de Saint-Victor after them.

CHAPTER XX

THE OUTPOSTS

Morgan pretended not to have noticed that he had passed his own outposts. He continued to advance arm in arm with Garat as far as the colonnade. He was one of those rigidly honest men who have confidence in his enemies even, and who believed that, in France at least, courage was the truest prudence.

When he reached the colonnade of the Louvre, Morgan found himself not more than twenty paces distant from the ranks of the Conventionals, and less than ten from the spot where General Cartaux stood leaning on his sword. Cartaux was magnificently dressed, and wore a hat with a tri-color plume which dangled so low before his eyes that he was greatly annoyed by it.

"You have a magnificent drum-major there," said Morgan; "I congratulate you upon him."

Garat smiled. It was not the first time that this mistake had been made, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

"That is not our drum-major," he said, "it is our commander, General Cartaux."

"Ah! the devil! He is the man who might have taken Toulon, and who, instead, allowed it to be captured by a little artillery officer named—what was his name, anyhow?—named Bonaparte, I believe. Ah! introduce me to this worthy officer; I adore handsome men and particularly handsome uniforms."

"Willingly," said Garat; and they advanced toward General Cartaux.

"General," said Garat to the colossus in uniform, "I have the honor to present to you the citizen-president of the Section Le Peletier, who has not only courteously made way for me through his men, but who has accompanied me thus far lest any mishap should befall me."

"Citizen," said Cartaux, drawing himself up in order not to lose an inch of his height, "I join with citizen-conventional Garat in thanking you."

"There is no necessity to do so, general," said Morgan, with his accustomed courtesy. "I saw you from a distance and wished to make your acquaintance. Besides, I wished to ask you whether you did not think it would be well for you to yield me this post, as you did the other, without bloodshed."

"Is that a jest or a proposition?" asked Cartaux, his coarse voice growing louder.

"It is a proposition," said Morgan, "and a serious one at that."

"It seems to me that you are too much of a soldier, citizen," said Cartaux, "not to understand the difference between this position and the other. The other can be attacked on four sides, while this can be reached on two only. Now, as you perceive, citizen, here are two guns ready to receive all those who approach by way of the quays, and two more for those who come through the Rue Saint-Honoré."

"But why do you not open fire, general?" asked the president, carelessly. "There is a fine range for cannon between the garden of the Infanta and the Pont-Neuf—scarcely a hundred feet."

"The general, wishing to place all responsibility of bloodshed upon the Sectionists, has forbidden us to open fire."

"What general? Barras?"

"No. General Bonaparte."

"Why, is that your little officer of Toulon? So he has made his way up until now he is a general like you."

"More of a general than I am," replied Cartaux, "since I am under his orders."

"How disagreeable that must be for you, citizen, and what a piece of injustice! You who are six feet tall to have to obey a young man of twenty-four, who, they say, is only five feet one."

"Do you know him?" asked Cartaux.

"No, I have not the honor."

"Well, open fire, and this evening—"

"This evening?"

"This evening you will know him, I promise you."

At that moment the drums were heard beating a salute, and a group of staff-officers emerged through the gate of the Louvre, among whom Barras was noticeable for the splendor of his uniform and Bonaparte for the simplicity of his.

He was, as we have said, short and thin, and as, from where Morgan stood, it was impossible to distinguish the fine lines of his face, he looked insignificant, riding as he was behind Barras.

"Ah," said Morgan, "that is something new!"

"Yes," replied Garat. "See! there is General Barras and General Bonaparte; they are going to visit the outposts."

"And which of the two is General Bonaparte?" asked Morgan.

"The one on the black horse."

"Why! he is a child who has not yet had time to grow," said Morgan, shrugging his shoulders.

"Don't worry," said Cartaux, laying his hand on Morgan's shoulder, "he will grow."

Barras, Bonaparte, and the rest of the staff continued to advance toward General Cartaux.

"I will stay," said Morgan; "I should like to see this Bonaparte close at hand."

"Then hide behind me, or, rather, behind Cartaux," said Garat; "you will have more room."

Morgan drew back and the cavalcade approached the general. Barras drew rein before General Cartaux, but Bonaparte rode forward a few steps further, and remained alone in the middle of the quay. As he was only half a musket shot from the Sectionist ranks, several muskets were aimed at him; whereupon Morgan sprang forward, and, with one bound, placed himself between the Sectionists and the general's body. Then, with a wave of his hat, he commanded them to lower their muskets.

Bonaparte rose in his stirrups, apparently unmindful of what had just taken place before him. The Pont-Neuf, the Rue de la Monnaie, the Quai de la Vallée, the Rue de Thionville, and the Quai Conti as far as the Institute, were thronged with armed men. As far as the eye could reach along the Quai de l'École, the Quai de la Mégisserie, and the Quai des Morfondus, muskets gleamed in the sun, thick as spears of wheat in a wheat field.

"How many men do you think there are before you, citizen Cartaux," asked Bonaparte.

"I could not say exactly," replied Cartaux. "In open country I could guess within a thousand men, but here in the streets and quays I cannot make even an approximate guess."

"General, if you want to know the exact number," said Garat, "ask the citizen who has just prevented those men from firing upon you. He can tell you."

Bonaparte glanced at the young man as if he now saw him for the first time.

"Citizen," said he with a slight bow, "will you be good enough to give me the information I desire?"

"I think, monsieur," said Morgan, taking care to address the Republican general in the manner used before the Revolution, "you asked the number of men opposed to you?"

"Yes," replied Bonaparte, fixing a penetrating eye upon his interlocutor.

"Before you, monsieur," resumed Morgan, "there are, visible or invisible, some thirty or thirty-two thousand men; ten thousand men in the direction of the Rue Saint-Roch; ten thousand between the Place des Filles de Saint-Thomas and the Barrière des Sergents. In the neighborhood of fifty-six thousand, as you see."

"Is that all?" asked Bonaparte.

"Do you not think that is enough to oppose to your five thousand?"

"You say you are sure of the number?" asked Bonaparte without replying to the other's question.

"Perfectly so, since I am one of their principal leaders."

A flash gleamed in the young general's eye, and he stared at Cartaux.

"How comes it that the citizen-Sectionist is here?" he asked; "is he your prisoner?"

"No, citizen-general," replied Cartaux.

"Did he come under a flag of truce?"

"No."

Bonaparte frowned. "But there must be some reason why he is in your ranks," he said.

"Citizen-general," said Garat, advancing, "I was with one hundred and fifty men, whom I had recruited in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, when we fell in with citizen Morgan and his troops. In order that neither I nor my men should suffer harm, he himself brought me here with a generosity and loyalty deserving of the utmost gratitude. Citizen Morgan, I thank you for the service you have rendered me, and I assert that not only have we no pretext for detaining you here, but that if we did so it would be in flagrant violation of honor and the rights of man. Citizen-general Bonaparte, I therefore ask your permission for the citizen to retire."

And Garat, advancing toward Morgan, clasped his hand, while Bonaparte, waving his hand toward the Sectionist outposts, made a sign to Morgan to return to his men. The latter bowed courteously to Bonaparte and walked slowly off, whistling the air of "La Belle Gabrielle."



CHAPTER XXI

THE STEPS OF SAINT-ROCH

As soon as Morgan had joined the Sectionists, and stood facing Bonaparte, the latter saluted him by drawing his sword, and then, turning to Cartaux, he said:

"You did well, general, to abandon the Pont-Neuf, in spite of the order which I gave you. You could not hold it with three hundred men against thirty-two thousand. But here you have more than a thousand men, and this is the Thermopylæ of the Convention; you must die rather than yield a single step. Come, Barras!"

Barras saluted General Cartaux and followed Bonaparte as though he were already accustomed to receiving orders from him. Then, continuing along the Quai, the young general ordered two guns to be placed a little below the balcony of Charles IX., to command the flank of the Quai Conti. Then, continuing to follow the Quai, he entered the court of the Carrousel. He had left by the swing-bridge at the extreme end of the Tuileries, had crossed the Place de la Révolution—where there was a strong reserve force of men and artillery—had followed the line of the Feuillants, the Place Vendôme, the Cul-de-sac du Dauphin, the Rue Saint-Honoré, and had then returned by way of the Louvre and re-entered by the Carrousel.

Just as Bonaparte and Barras disappeared within the gate of the Carrousel, a messenger bearing a flag of truce was introduced to them with all the ceremonial customary among men all over the civilized world when treating with fortified towns. The bearer approached them through the gate of L'Echelle, on the opposite side of the Carrousel, and was preceded by a trumpeter. Questioned as to his errand, he said that he came with proposals from citizen Danican, general-in-chief of the Sectionists.

The two generals led him to the hall of the Convention, where the bandage covering his eyes was removed. Then, in a threatening voice, he offered peace on condition that the battalion of the Patriots should be disarmed and the decrees of Fructidor repealed. Then the Convention gave way to a weakness, which, to their shame, is often manifest in large assemblies. And the strangest part of all was that this weakness emanated from a quarter where the greatest strength had been looked for.

Boissy d'Anglas, so grand, so firm, so like the ancients on the 1st Prairial, now descended from the tribune, and offered the Sectionists, not what they had demanded, but a conference with Danican, in which they might come to an understanding. Another deputy proposed to disarm all those patriots of '89 whose conduct during the Revolution had been reprehensible. Finally a third proposed a more reprehensible measure than the preceding ones; namely, to trust to the good faith of the Sections. Lanjuinais, who had so resolutely withstood the Jacobins and who had dared to oppose the massacres of September, yielded to fear, and suggested that it would be well to accept the proposals of these "good citizens." Now the "good citizens" were none other than the Sectionists.

One of the Conventionals went even further, crying: "I am told that some assassins have crept into the battalion of the patriots of '89. I demand that they be shot."

But then Chénier sprang to the tribune. The poet's head was conspicuous among all that throng of heads. His brow was inspired, not by the muse of drama, but by the genius of patriotism.

"I am in truth amazed," he cried, "that you should dare to consider the demands of the revolted Sections. There can be no middle course for the Convention. Victory or death! When the Convention has conquered, it will be time enough to separate the guilty from those who are only misguided. Talk of assassins," he continued; "what of the assassins in the revolted parties!"

Lanjuinais ascended the tribune and said: "I foresee civil war."

Twenty voices cried out at the same time: "Civil war! It is you who are bringing it about."

Lanjuinais endeavored to reply, but cries of "Down! Down!" came from all parts of the hall.

It is true that just then they had seen General Bonaparte receive some stacks of arms.

"For whom are these arms?" they cried.

"For the Convention, if it is worthy of them," replied he.

The inspiration breathed by the young general's reply thrilled every heart.

"Arms! Give us arms!" cried the Conventionals. "We will die together!"

The Convention, humiliated for a moment, had recovered itself. The lives of its representatives were not yet saved, but their honor was. Bonaparte profited by the spark of enthusiasm which he had just kindled. Each deputy received a musket and a packet of cartridges. Barras exclaimed: "We are going to die in the streets in defence of the Convention. It is for you to die here, if need be, in defence of liberty."

Chénier, who had been the hero of the session, ascended the tribune again, and, with that eloquence which is akin to grandeur, he raised his arms to heaven, saying: "O Thou, who for the last six years hath guided the ship of the Revolution through the most frightful tempests, amid the rocks of contending parties; Thou, through whose aid we have conquered Europe without a government and without rulers, without generals, and with soldiers without pay, O thou, Genius of Liberty, watch over us Thy last defenders!"

At that moment, as though in answer to Chénier's prayer, the first shots were heard. Every deputy seized his musket, and, biting off his cartridge, loaded it. It was a solemn moment, during which nothing but the sound of ramrods in the musket barrels was heard.

Ever since early morning the Republicans, provoked by the grossest insults and even by occasional shots, had obeyed with heroic patience the order not to fire. But attacked this time by a volley from a court which the Sectionists had captured, and seeing one Republican drop dead, and others, wounded, totter and even fall, they replied by a volley.

Bonaparte at the first shot hastened into the court of the Tuileries.

"Who fired first?" he asked.

"The Sectionists," came the answer from all sides.

"Then all is well," he said. "And it will not be my fault if our uniforms are reddened with French blood."

He listened; it seemed to him that the firing was heaviest in the direction of Saint-Roch. He set out at a gallop, and found two pieces of artillery at the Feuillants, which he ordered to be limbered up, and advanced with them to the head of the Rue du Dauphin.

The Rue du Dauphin was a furnace. The Republicans held the street and were defending it. But the Sectionists occupied all the windows, and stood in groups upon the steps of the church of Saint-Roch, whence they were raining a hail of bullets upon their adversaries.

Bonaparte arrived at this moment, followed by his two pieces of artillery and the battalion of '89. He ordered the two officers of the battalion to advance into the Rue Saint-Honoré, amid and in spite of the terrible fusillade, and wheel one to the right and the other to the left.

The officers called their men, executed the requisite manœuvre, and fired in the direction designated, one toward the Palais Royal and the other toward the Place Vendôme. At the same moment a hurricane of fire swept along behind them. It was caused by General Bonaparte's two cannon, which vomited fire simultaneously and covered the steps of the church of Saint-Roch with corpses and blood.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ROUT

When the smoke from the cannon had cleared, the Sectionists who remained standing could see, not fifty paces from them, Bonaparte on horseback in the midst of his gunners, who were reloading their guns. They replied to the cannonade by a heavy fire. Seven or eight of the gunners fell, and Bonaparte's black horse sank to the ground, shot dead by a bullet in the forehead.

"Fire!" cried Bonaparte as he fell.

The cannon thundered a second time. Bonaparte had time to rise. He had concealed the battalion of '89 in the Cul-de-sac de Dauphine, which they had reached through the stables.

"This way, volunteers!" he cried, drawing his sword.

The battalion of volunteers rushed toward him with drawn swords. They were tried men who had seen all the first battles of the Revolution. Bonaparte noticed an old drummer standing in a corner.

"Come here," he said, "and beat the charge."

"The charge, my boy," said the old drummer, who saw that he had to do with a young man of twenty-five; "you want the charge? well, you shall have it; and a warm one."

And, placing himself at the head of the battalion of '89, he beat the charge. The regiment marched straight to the church steps, and, with their bayonets, pinned to the doors all the Sectionists who had remained standing.

"At a gallop to the Rue Saint-Honoré!" shouted Bonaparte.

The cannon obeyed as if they understood the command. The guns had been reloaded while the battalion of volunteers were marching against Saint-Roch.

"Wheel to the right!" said Bonaparte to the gunners in charge of one of the cannon.

"To the left," he cried to the others.

Then, to both at the same time, he shouted: "Fire!"

And he swept the whole length of the Rue Saint-Honoré with two charges of grape-shot.

The Sectionists, annihilated, without being able to tell whence the thunderbolt had fallen, took refuge in the church of Saint-Roch, in the Théâtre du République, now the Théâtre-Française, and in the Palais-Égalité. Bonaparte had put them to flight, had broken and dispersed their ranks; it was for others to drive them from their last intrenchments. He mounted another horse which was brought him, and shouted: "Patriots of '89, the honor of the day is yours! Finish what you have so well begun."

These men who did not know him were astonished at being commanded by a boy. But they had seen him at work and were dazzled by his calmness under fire. They scarcely knew his name; they certainly did not know who he was. They put their hats on the ends of their muskets and cried: "Long live the Convention!"

The wounded, who were stretched along the side of the houses, raised themselves upon the doorsteps or clung to the gratings of the windows, shouting: "Long live the Republic!"

The dead lay in heaps in the street, and blood poured through the gutters as in a slaughter house, but enthusiasm hovered over the corpses.

"I have nothing more to do here," said the young general.

And putting spurs to his horse, he rode across the Place Vendôme, which was now empty, and reached the Rue Florentin almost in the midst of the fugitives whom he seemed to be pursuing, and from thence he passed into the Place de la Révolution.

There he directed General Montchoisy, who was in command of the reserves, to form a column, to take two twelve-pounders, and to advance by way of the Boulevard to the Porte-Saint-Honoré, in order to return to the Place Vendôme; from there he was to effect a junction with the guard attached to the staff in the Rue des Capucines, and with it to return

to the Place Vendôme, and thus drive out all the Sectionists who might remain there.

At the same time General Brune, obeying General Bonaparte's order, passed through the Rues Nicaise and Saint-Honoré. All the Sectionists from the Barrière des Sergents to the Place Vendôme, attacked on three sides at once, were either killed or taken prisoners. Those who escaped by the Rue de la Loi, formerly the Rue Richelieu, erected a barrier at the head of the Rue Saint-Marc.

It was General Danican who made this attempt with some ten thousand men, whom he had gathered together at the point nearest the Convention, believing he had only to force the wicket of L'Echelle to reach the Assembly. Wishing to reserve all the honors of the day for himself, he had forbidden Morgan, who commanded on the Pont-Neuf, and Coster de Saint-Victor, who was stationed at the Quai Conti, to take a single step.

Suddenly Morgan perceived Danican with the remnant of his ten thousand men advancing through the Rue des Halles and the Place du Châtelet. The impetus thus given extended to the Quai du Louvre and also to the Quai Conti. This was the movement which Bonaparte had foreseen when he left the church of Saint-Roch.

From the Place de la Révolution he saw them advancing in close columns, on the one side from the garden of the Infanta and on the other from the Quai Malaquais. He sent two batteries to take up their positions on the Quai des Tuileries, and ordered them to commence firing at once diagonally across the river. He then set off at a gallop for the Rue du Bac, turned three guns, ready loaded, upon the Quai Voltaire, and cried "Fire!" just as the column emerged from behind the Institute.

Obliged to march in a compact body, as they passed between the monument and the quai, the Sectionists massed into a deep but narrow body, and it was at this moment that the artillery commenced to fire, and the shot swept through their ranks, literally mowing down the battalions as with a scythe. The battery consisted of six guns, of which only three were fired at a time, the other three reloading and then firing again in turn; consequently the firing was incessant.

The Sections wavered and drew back. Coster de Saint-Victor put himself at their head, rallied them, and was the first to cross the narrow passage. His men followed him. The cannon thundered on their flank and in front. His men fell around him while he remained standing about ten feet in front of the mutilated column, the remnant of which rapidly withdrew.

The young chief sprang upon the parapet of the bridge, where he stood, a target for every shot, and harangued them—insulted them, even. Stung by his sarcasms, the Sectionists attempted once again to cross the passage. Coster leaped from the parapet and again put himself at their head.

The artillery made terrible havoc as the shot plowed through the ranks; a single shot killing or wounding at least three or four men. Coster's hat, which he held in his hand, was carried away, but the hurricane of fire passed around him without touching him.

Coster looked around only to find himself alone. He recognized the impossibility of restoring the courage of his followers; then he glanced in the direction of the Quai du Louvre, and saw that Morgan was waging deadly battle there with Cartaux. He darted through the Rue Mazarin to the Rue Guénégaud, and thence to the summit of the Quai Conti, which was heaped with dead, exposed as it was to the fire of the battery on the Quai des Tuileries. On his way he rallied round him a thousand men, crossed the Pont-Neuf with them, and emerged at their head upon the Quai de l'École.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE VICTORY

The struggle on this side was indeed terrible! Scarcely had Morgan, who was boiling with impatience, heard Danican's voice, still a long distance behind, crying "Forward!" than he fell like an avalanche upon Cartaux's men. The movement was so rapid that the latter had not even time to present arms and fire. They aimed at random, and then received Morgan and his men at the point of their bayonets.

The battery under the balcony of Charles IX. narrowly escaped capture, so unexpected was the attack. The Sectionists were not more than ten feet away from the guns when the gunners instinctively lowered their matches and fired.

It would be impossible to describe the horrible and bloody gap which these three guns, fired thus simultaneously, made in the closely packed ranks before them; it was like a breach in a wall. The advance of the Sectionists was so rapid, however, that even this breach did not check them. But at that moment bullets rained like hail upon the ranks of the Sectionists from the colonnade of the Louvre, which was covered with sharpshooters.

Meantime a hand-to-hand battle was being waged in the open space before the Louvre. The Sectionists were in fact caught between two fires. All the houses in the Rue des Poulies, the Rue des Fosses-Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, and the Rue des Pretres overlooking the garden of the Infanta, vomited forth fire and death.

Morgan had promised himself to take Cartaux prisoner. He contrived to reach him, but Cartaux sought shelter behind the bayonets of his men. For a moment it was a duel to the death all along the line. The Sectionists, repulsed by the bayonets, drew back a step, reloaded their guns, fired pointblank, and then, reversing their weapons, used them as clubs, and tried to fight their way out of the circle of fire which surrounded them. But nothing could break it.

Suddenly Morgan felt something give way behind him. The artillery, which had continued its deadly work, had cut his column in two, and it was obliged to incline to the right to maintain its position near the Louvre.

There was now a large open space between the Rue de la Monnaie and the Pont-Neuf; the Sectionists, not daring to risk themselves upon the Quai du Louvre, had sought shelter behind the houses in the Rue de la Monnaie and the parapet of the Pont-Neuf. Morgan was therefore obliged to retreat; but just as he reached the upper part of the Pont-Neuf, Coster de Saint-Victor came rapidly down the Rue Guénégaud. The two young men recognized each other, uttered a cry of joy, and carrying their men with them by the mere force of example, returned with redoubled fury to that Quai du Louvre which they had been forced to abandon shortly before.

Here the same butchery recommenced. Bonaparte had taken his measures with admirable precaution, and the Louvre was impregnable. Artillery, muskets and shells rained death from every side. Folly alone could have continued such a struggle.

On the other hand, Cartaux, who saw the wavering of the Sectionists, who were in reality sustained by the courage of two men alone, ordered his men to fire for a last time, and then, forming in column, to advance at double-quick.

The Sectionists were annihilated. More than half of them were lying on the pavement. In the last rank, Morgan, with only a fragment of his sword left in his hand, and Coster de Saint-Victor, who had bound up a flesh wound in the thigh with his handkerchief, had recoiled like two lions forced to retreat before their hunters.

By half-past six everything was over, every column broken and dispersed. Two hours had sufficed to accomplish this tremendous defeat. Of the fifty thousand Sectionists who had taken part in the fight, scarcely a thousand were left, and they were scattered broadcast—some in the church of Saint-Roch, some in the Palais-Égalité, others behind the barricade in the Rue de la Loi, and others at the windows of the houses. As night was coming on, and Bonaparte wished to save the innocent from suffering with the guilty, he ordered his men to pursue the Sectionists as far as the Pont du Change and the boulevards, but with guns loaded with powder only. Their terror was so great that the noise alone would be sufficient to make them flee.

At seven in the evening Barras and Bonaparte entered the hall of the Convention together in the midst of the deputies, who laid down their weapons to clasp their hands.

"Conscript fathers," said Barras, "your enemies are no longer! You are free and the country is saved!"

Cries of "Long live Barras!" echoed on all sides. But he shook his head, and, commanding silence, continued: "The

victory is not mine, citizen representatives. It is due to the prompt and skilful arrangements of my young colleague, Bonaparte."

And as the shouts of gratitude continued, gathering in vehemence because their terror had been so great, a ray of the setting sun shone across the vaulted ceiling, framing the calm, bronze head of the young victor in an aureole of purple and gold.

"Do you see?" said Chénier to Tallien, regarding the shaft of light as an omen. "If that were Brutus!"

That same evening Morgan, safe and sound by a miracle, passed the barrier without being stopped, and took the road to Besançon. Coster de Saint-Victor, thinking that nowhere could he be better concealed than in the house of Barras's mistress, sought shelter of the beautiful Aurélie de Saint-Amour.



CHAPTER XXIV

THE SWORD OF THE VICOMTE DE BEAUHARNAIS

After events like these, when cannon have thundered in the public squares and blood has run in the streets of the capital, society is always thrown into a turmoil from which it takes a long time to recover.

Although the 14th Vendémiaire had sufficed to remove the most noticeable traces of the combat as well as the corpses, the people continued for a long time to discuss that terrible day, which had resulted in restoring to the Convention threatened with destruction—that is to say, to the Revolution and its authors—the power which they needed to establish those institutions, fear of which had produced the event which we have just related.

The Convention understood so thoroughly on the morning of the 14th that its power was fully restored, that it did not trouble itself as to what had become of the Sectionaries, who had disappeared without leaving any trace of their passage other than the blood they had shed, and which had disappeared during the following day, if not from the memories of the citizens, at least from the pavement of the streets.

They contented themselves with dismissing the staff of the National Guard, disbanding the chasseurs and grenadiers, who were almost all young men, placing the National Guard under the orders of Barras, or rather his young colleague, Bonaparte, to whom the former had abandoned almost all the active part of the work. They also commanded the disarming of the Section Le Peletier, and the Section Théâtre Français, and finally formed three commissions to try the leading members of the Sectionists, who had almost entirely disappeared.

Anecdotes of the day were related for some time—this day which was destined to leave so lasting and bloody an impression upon the minds of Parisians. The magnificent words which had fallen from the lips of the wounded, or rather from the wounds themselves, on that day of supreme patriotism, were repeated and extolled. They told how the wounded, who had been carried to the Convention in the Salle des Victoires, which had been transformed into a hospital, had been cared for by the gentle hands of the wives and daughters of the members of the Convention, who assumed the rôle of Sisters of Charity.

They praised Barras for choosing his second with such unerring judgment at the first glance, and that second, who, unknown to them on the previous evening, had burst upon them like a god from the midst of thunder and lightning.

Descending from this brilliant pedestal, Bonaparte remained general of the interior; and to be within reach of the staff, who had their headquarters on the Boulevard des Capucines, in what had formerly been the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he took two rooms in the Hôtel de la Concorde, Rue Neuve-des-Capucines.

A young man was introduced into the room which he used for a study, under the name of Eugene de Beauharnais.

Although he was already besieged by petitioners, Bonaparte had not yet reached the point of drawing a sharp line as to whom he would or would not receive. Besides, the name of Beauharnais awakened only pleasing memories. He therefore gave orders that the young man was to be admitted.

For those of our readers who have already seen him at Strasbourg some three years earlier, it will suffice to say that he was a handsome young man of sixteen or seventeen years of age.

He had large eyes, thick black hair, red lips, white teeth, and aristocratic hands and feet—a mark of distinction which the general immediately noticed—and apart from the embarrassment inseparable from a first interview, he had that attractive modesty which is so becoming in youth, above all when its possessor appears as a suppliant.

From the time he entered the room Bonaparte watched him attentively, which did not tend to lessen Eugene's timidity.

But suddenly shaking the feeling off as if it were unworthy of him, he raised his head, and, drawing himself up, said: "After all, I do not see why I should hesitate to proffer a request which is both pious and loyal."

"I am listening," said Bonaparte.

"I am the son of the Vicomte de Beauharnais."

"Of the citizen-general," corrected Bonaparte gently.

"Of the citizen-general, if you prefer," said the young man, "and if you insist upon Republican forms."

"I insist upon nothing," replied Bonaparte, "save that which is clear and concise."

"Well," resumed the young man, "I come to ask at your hands, citizen-general, the sword of my father, Alexandre de Beauharnais, who was a general like yourself. I am sixteen years old, and my military education is almost completed. It is for me to serve my country now. I hope some day to wear at my side the sword which my father wore. That is why I have come to ask you for it."

Bonaparte, who liked clear, precise replies, was much prepossessed by this firm, intelligent language.

"If I should ask you for more information concerning yourself and your family, citizen," asked Bonaparte, "would you attribute the request to curiosity or to the interest with which you have inspired me?"

"I should prefer to think that the report of our misfortunes had reached your ears," replied the young man, "and that it is to that I owe the kindness with which you have received me."

"Was not your mother a prisoner also?" asked Bonaparte.

"Yes, and she was saved almost by a miracle. We owe her life to citizeness Tallien and to citizen Barras."

Bonaparte reflected a moment. "How does your father's sword happen to be in my hands?"

"I do not say that it is in your hands, but you can have it restored to me, though. The Convention ordered the disarming of the Section Le Peletier. We are living in our old house in the Rue Neuve-des-Mathurins, which the general had restored to us. Some men came to my mother and asked for all the weapons in the house. My mother gave orders that they should take a double-barrelled hunting gun of mine, a single-barrelled rifle which I bought at Strasbourg, and finally my father's sword. I regretted neither the double-barrelled gun nor the rifle, though I took pride in the memories which they recalled. But I regretted, and I confess still regret, that sword which fought so gloriously in America and France."

"If you were to see the weapons which formerly belonged to you," said Bonaparte, "you would probably recognize them."

"Beyond doubt," replied Eugene.

Bonaparte rang and a sub-officer entered.

"Accompany citizen Beauharnais to the rooms where they have put the arms belonging to the Sections," said Bonaparte. "You will allow him to take those which he will point out to you."

And he held out his hand to the young man, the hand which was to lift him so high. Ignorant of the future, Eugene darted toward it and kissed it gratefully.

"Ah, citizen!" said he, "my mother and sister shall know how good you have been to me, and, believe me, they will appreciate it as much as I do."

Just then the door opened and Barras entered without being announced.

"Ah!" said he, "here I am on ground with which I am doubly familiar!"

"I have already told citizen Bonaparte how much we owe you," replied Eugene, "and I am happy to repeat before you, that without your protection the widow and children of General Beauharnais would probably have died of hunger."

"Died of hunger!" said Bonaparte, laughing. "That is a death which only those officers whom Aubry has placed on the retired list need fear."

"I was indeed wrong," said Eugene. "For while my mother was in prison, I worked with a carpenter where I earned my daily bread, and my sister was with a seamstress who supported her out of charity."

"Well," said Barras, "the bad days are over and the good ones have returned. What has brought you here, my young friend?"

Eugene told Barras the reason of his visit.

"Why did you not come to me," asked Barras, "instead of disturbing my colleague?"

"Because I wished to meet citizen-general Bonaparte," replied Eugene. "It seemed to me that it would be a good omen if he returned me my father's sword."

And, bowing to the two generals, he went out with the officer, much less embarrassed than when he had come.

CHAPTER XXV

THE MAP OF MARENGO

The two generals were left alone. Both had followed the young man with their eyes, each one inspired with different thoughts, until the door had closed upon him.

"That boy has a heart of gold," said Barras. "Just think, when he was only thirteen years and a half old—I did not know him then—he went to Strasbourg alone in the hope of finding some papers there which would justify his father before the revolutionary tribunal. But the revolutionary tribunal was in a hurry. It cut off the father's head while it was waiting for the papers the son was collecting. It was time anyway for Eugene to return, for had it not been for Saint-Just, whom he met there, I do not know what might have happened to Eugene. He attacked Tétrell, one of the leaders, who was twice as big as he, in the midst of a play at the theatre. If the people, who had seen him during the day when he was fighting against the Prussians, had not taken his part boldly, the poor boy would have been badly singed."

"I suppose," said Bonaparte, always precise, "that you did not put yourself out to come here for the purpose of discussing this young man, since you did not know that he had come to see me."

"No," said Barras, "I came to make you a present."

"Me?"

"Yes, you," said Barras. And going to the door of the ante-chamber, he opened it and made a sign. Two men entered. They were carrying an immense piece of rolled canvas on their shoulders as two carpenters would carry a beam.

"Goodness! what is that?" asked Bonaparte.

"You have often spoken to me of your desire to make a campaign in Italy, general."

"You mean," interrupted Bonaparte, "of the necessity which will some day arise for France to decide the Austrian question."

"Well, for some time Carnot, who is of your opinion, has been occupied in making the most complete map of Italy which exists in the world. I asked for it at the Ministry of War, and, although they were inclined to refuse, they finally gave it to me, and I give it to you."

Bonaparte seized Barras's hand, and said: "This is indeed a present, especially if it is given to me as the man who is to make use of it. Open it," he continued, addressing the men who were carrying it.

They knelt down and untied the cords, but when they tried to unroll it they found that the room was not half large enough to hold it.

"Good!" exclaimed Bonaparte; "here I am forced to build a house to hold your present."

"Oh!" replied Barras, "when the time comes for you to use it, you may be living in a house which is large enough for you to hang it between two windows. In the meantime look at the part which is unrolled. Not a hill, not a brook is wanting."

The porters opened the map as far as the space permitted. The portion which they uncovered extended across the Gulf of Genoa, from Ajaccio to Savona.

"By the way," said Bonaparte, "is that not where Schérer, Masséna, and Kellermann are—here at Cervoni?"

"Yes," replied Barras, "we received word to that effect only this evening. How could I have forgotten to tell you! Augereau has won a great victory at Loano. Masséna and Joubert, whom Kellermann kept in his army despite the order of their dismissal which the Committee of Public Safety forwarded him, displayed magnificent courage."

"It is not there, it is not there," murmured Bonaparte. "What do blows aimed at the limbs amount to? Nothing! They should aim at the heart. Milan, Mantua, Verona, those are the places to strike. Ah! if ever—"

"What?" asked Barras.

"Nothing," replied Bonaparte. Then, turning brusquely to Barras, he asked: "Are you sure to be appointed one of the five directors?"

"Yesterday," replied Barras, lowering his voice, "the Conventionals met to decide upon the members of the Directory."

They argued for some time, and the names which successfully passed the first test, are: Mine, then Rewbell, Sièyes third, then La Reveillière-Lepaux, and Letourneur; but one of the five will certainly not accept."

"Who is the ambitious one?"

"Sièyes."

"Is there any talk of the man who will replace him?"

"In all probability it will be Carnot."

"You will lose nothing by that. But why not introduce some name like Pichegru, Kléber, Hoche or Moreau, among all those names of civilians?"

"They were afraid of giving the military too much power."

Bonaparte began to laugh.

"Nonsense!" he said. "When Cæsar took Rome he was neither tribune nor consul; he had just returned from Gaul, where he had won eighty battles and subdued three hundred tribes. That is the way dictators have. But none of the men we have just mentioned is built on the plan of a Cæsar. If the five men you have named are chosen you will go on well enough. You have popularity, talent for the initiative, and activity; you will naturally be the leading man of the Directory. Rewbell and Letourneur are men who will do the work, while you represent the people. La Reveillière-Lepaux is wise and honest and will furnish the morality for you all. As for Carnot, I do not quite know what part of the work you will assign to him."

"He will continue to make plans and to lay off victories on paper," said Barras.

"Let him make as many plans as he pleases. But if ever I have any command of importance, do not take the trouble to send them to me."

"Why not?"

"Because battles are not won with a map, a pair of compasses, and red, blue or green-headed pins. It needs instinct, an unerring glance, genius. I should like to know if Hannibal had plans of the battles of Trebbia, of Lake Trasymene, and of Cannes sent him from Carthage. I snap my fingers at your plans! Do you know what you ought to do? You ought to give me the details which you have received concerning the battle of Loano; and, since this map is unrolled at that very place, I would be interested in following the movements of our troops and the Austrians."

Barras drew from his pocket a note written with the laconism of a telegraphic despatch and handed it to Bonaparte.

"Patience," said he; "you have the map, and the command will follow, perhaps."

Bonaparte read the despatch eagerly.

"Good!" said he. "Loano is the key to Genoa, and Genoa is the magazine of Italy." Then, continuing to read the despatch, he said: "Masséna, Kellermann, Joubert, what men! and what could not a man do with them! He who could bring them together and make the most of their diverse qualities would be the veritable Olympian Jove with the thunderbolt in his hand!"

Then he murmured the names of Hoche, Kléber and Moreau, and, with a pair of compasses in his hand, he stretched himself out upon the great map, of which only one corner was uncovered. There he began to study the marches and counter-marches which had led up to the famous battle of Loano. When Barras took his departure, Bonaparte scarcely noticed it, so absorbed was he in his strategic combinations.

"It cannot have been Schérer," he said, "who devised and executed this movement. Neither can it have been Carnot; there is too great an element of the unexpected about it. It was doubtless Masséna."

He had been lying upon this map, which was never to leave him, for about half an hour, when the door opened and a voice announced: "The citizeness Beauharnais."

Bonaparte, in his abstraction, thought he heard the words, "The citizen Beauharnais," and, imagining that it was the young man whom he had already seen who had returned to thank him for the favor which he had just granted him, he exclaimed: "Let him come in, let him come in!"

As he spoke, there appeared at the door, not only the young man whom he had already seen, but also a charming woman

of about twenty-seven or eight years of age. He half rose in his astonishment, and it was thus, with one knee on the ground, that Bonaparte first saw Marie-Rose-Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie, the widow of Beauharnais.

CHAPTER XXVI

MARIE-ROSE-JOSEPHINE TASCHER DE LA PAGERIE, VICOMTESSE BEAUHARNAIS

Bonaparte paused as if smitten with admiration. Madame de Beauharnais, at the time of which we are writing, was, as we have said, about twenty-seven years of age, of indisputable beauty, with a charming grace of manner, exhaling from her whole person that subtle fascination which resembles the perfume which Venus gave to her chosen ones to inspire love.

Her hair and eyes were black, her nose was straight, her mouth a smiling curve; the oval outline of her face was irreproachable. Her neck was set gracefully upon her shoulders, her figure was flexible and undulating, her arm was perfectly shaped, and her hand beautiful beyond comparison.

Nothing could have been more attractive than her Creole accent, of which she had retained only sufficient trace to betray her tropical birth.

As her maiden name indicated, Madame de Beauharnais belonged to a noble family. Born at Martinique, her education, like that of all Creoles, was left entirely to herself; but rare qualities of mind and heart had made of Mademoiselle Tascher de la Pagerie one of the most cultivated women of any age. Her kind heart had taught her early in life that, although they had wool on their heads, the negroes were more to be pitied than other men, since, through the power and cupidity of the whites, they had been torn from their own country and transferred to a land where they suffered constantly, and not infrequently were killed by cruelty.

The thing that attracted her attention was the plight of these unhappy men. All their family ties were sundered, but brothers in toil they stood with bent backs, toiling beneath the rays of the sun, delving in a soil which their blood and their sweat fertilized, but not for themselves.

She asked herself in her youthful intelligence, why these men had been placed beyond the pale of the law? Why they should vegetate, naked, without shelter, without property, honor, liberty? and she herself found the answer—that all this was to enrich avaricious masters, who, from infancy, condemned this race to a life of hopeless and unending torture. And young Josephine's pity had influenced her parents, at least, to make an earthly paradise for the slaves.

They were still white and black; but almost to the extent of being free, these blacks shared in all the advantages and some of the pleasures of life. And, while nowhere in the island were the negroes sure of marrying the women of their choice, marriages for love rewarded with affectionate and faithful service more surely their young mistress Josephine than was the case with any of the other slave owners.

She was about thirteen years old when a young officer of great merit and noble birth arrived at Martinique, and became acquainted with her at her Aunt Renaudin's house.

This was the Vicomte de Beauharnais.

The one possessed in his person everything calculated to please. She possessed in heart everything destined to inspire love. They loved each other therefore with all the ardor of two young people who have the delight of realizing their dreams of kindred souls.

"I have chosen you," said Alexandre, pressing her hand tenderly.

"And I have found you," replied Josephine, holding up her forehead to him to kiss.

Her Aunt Renaudin felt that it would be opposing the decrees of Providence to forbid the loves of the two young people. Their relatives were all in France. Their consent was necessary in order to consummate this marriage to which Aunt Renaudin saw no obstacle. Obstacles were raised, however, by Messieurs de Beauharnais, the father and uncle of the young man. In an access of fraternal affection they had once promised each other that their children should marry each other. He whom the young Creole already regarded as her husband was therefore the destined spouse of another, and that other his cousin.

Alexandre's father yielded first. When he saw the despair into which his refusal had plunged the young people, he himself agreed to go to his brother and tell him of the change which threatened to upset their plans. But the latter was less kindly in disposition, and informed his brother that while he might be willing to break his word, a thing unworthy of a gentleman, he, the brother, would not acquiesce in any such arrangement.

The vicomte's father came away in despair at having quarreled with his brother, but he not only renewed his promise to consent, he actually did consent.

It was then that the young Josephine, who was later to give the world an example of such heroic self-sacrifice and absolute devotion, sounded the prelude as it were to the great divorce scene. She insisted that the vicomte should sacrifice his passion for her to the tranquillity and welfare of his family.

She informed the vicomte that she wished to have an interview with his uncle, and accompanied him to M. de Beauharnais's house. She bade him enter a smaller room, adjacent to the one where M. de Beauharnais, marvelling at her visit, had consented to receive her. M. de Beauharnais rose, for he was a gentleman and was receiving a lady.

"Sir," said she, "you do not, and you cannot love me; but what do you know of me that you should hate me? Whence comes this hatred which you have declared for me, and what justifies it? Certainly not my affection for the Vicomte de Beauharnais, for that is pure and legitimate, and is returned by him. When we first revealed our love to each other we were ignorant that social obligations and family interest, of which I knew nothing, could make that confession of love a crime. Well, Monsieur de Beauharnais, all our faults, and above all mine, hinge upon this marriage which was planned by my aunt and agreed to by M. de Beauharnais. Alexandre and I, more considerate of your wishes than of our own happiness, have the terrible courage to sacrifice that happiness to you. If he and I renounce this marriage, which prevents the one you have at heart, will you still think your nephew unworthy of your friendship and deem me deserving of your scorn?"

The Marquis de Beauharnais, amazed at what he had heard, studied Mademoiselle Tascher de la Pagerie for some time in silence; but not being able to credit the sincerity of her remarks, he retorted, concealing with a veneer of politeness the insulting nature of his remarks:

"Mademoiselle, I have heard of the beauty, the wit, and the noble sentiments of Mademoiselle Tascher de la Pagerie, always in terms of the highest praise; but this union which I feared, and in which my nephew is so well justified, or at least excusable, I find all the more blameworthy, because it is so invincible—because a rival, far from overcoming its influence, only tended to increase it, and because it was very difficult to foresee that it had the power to check its own progress. This, mademoiselle, is the spectacle which you present to-day—a spectacle so singular that, permit me to say, in order not to suspect you of the most adroit egotism and the most profound and well-acted dissimulation, I must have recourse to a third supposition, which you will perhaps resent just because it is a natural one."

"What is that supposition, sir?" asked Mademoiselle de la Pagerie.

"That you have either ceased to love my nephew or that he no longer loves you."

The vicomte, who had been listening with mingled grief and astonishment, opened the door and rushed into the room.

"You are mistaken, sir," he said; "she still loves me and I love her more than ever. But as she is an angel, she is sacrificing herself and me to our families; but by misunderstanding and calumniating her you have proved that you are not worthy of the sacrifice she was willing to make. Come, Josephine, come. All that I can do, and it is my last concession, is to leave the matter to my father to decide. What he determines upon we will do."

They returned to the house, where Mademoiselle de la Pagerie related to Monsieur de Beauharnais all that had just occurred, asking for his final decision, and promising, on her own behalf and that of his son, to abide by it.

But the count, with tears in his eyes, took the hands of the two young people and said:

"Never were you more worthy of one another than when you renounced your hopes of mutual happiness. You ask my final decision. It is that you shall marry, and it is my earnest wish that you may be happy."

A week later Mademoiselle de la Pagerie became the Vicomtesse de Beauharnais.

Nothing happened to disturb the happiness of the young people until the Revolution began. The Vicomte de Beauharnais ranged himself among those who favored its adoption; only he made the mistake of thinking that the avalanche could be directed as it rushed on, carrying all before it. He was swept in its wake to the scaffold.

CHAPTER XXVII

WHERE AN ANGEL STEPS A MIRACLE IS PERFORMED

On the evening preceding the day on which he was to die, the Vicomte de Beauharnais wrote his wife the following letter. It was his final farewell:

Night of the 6th and 7th Thermidor.
At the Conciergerie

Yet a few moments to give to love, to tears, and to regrets, and then every thought shall be devoted to the glory of my destiny and to the great dreams of immortality. When you receive this letter, oh, my Josephine, your husband, in the words of this world, will long have ceased to exist; but already in the bosom of his God, he will have tasted of the joys of real life. You see therefore that you must not weep for him. The wicked men, the senseless ones who survive him, should have all your tears, for they do evil and cannot repair it.

But do not let us blacken with their guilty image these last moments. I would, on the contrary, brighten them by thinking that, beloved by an adorable wife, the short day of our wedded life has passed without the slightest cloud. Yes, our union has lasted but a day, and that reflection draws a sigh from me. But how serene and pure was that day which has vanished like a dream; and how grateful ought I to be to that Providence which must have you in its keeping! To-day that same Providence is taking me away before my time, and that is another of its favors. Can a good man live without grief, and almost remorse, when he sees the whole universe in the clutches of the wicked? I should therefore be glad to be taken away from them, were it not for the feeling that I am leaving to their tender mercies lives which are so precious and dear to me. If, however, the thoughts of the dying are trustworthy presentiments, I feel in my heart that these butcheries are soon to cease, and that the executioners will follow their victims to the scaffold....

I resume these incoherent, almost illegible lines after being interrupted by my keepers. I have just undergone a cruel formality which, under other circumstances, I would rather have died than endure. But why cavil at necessity? Reason teaches us to make the best of it.

After they had cut off my hair, I bethought me of buying back a part of it, in order to leave my dear wife and children unequivocal proofs and tokens of my dying remembrance.... I feel my heart breaking at this thought, and my paper is wet with tears.

Farewell, all that I love. Love me, speak of me, and never forget that the glory of dying a victim of tyrants, and a martyr to the cause of liberty, makes the scaffold illustrious!

Arrested in turn, as we have already mentioned, the vicomtesse wrote to her children, just before she was to die, in the same strain. She ended a long letter, which we have before us, with these words:

For my part, my children, as I am about to die, as did your father before me, a victim to the mad excesses which he always opposed, and which finally devoured him, I leave this life with no feeling of hatred for his executioners and for my own, whom I despise.

Honor my memory even as you share my sentiments. I leave you for an inheritance the glory of your father and your mother's name, which some poor wretches have blessed—our love, our blessings, and our regrets.

Madame de Beauharnais was finishing this letter when she heard shouts of "Death to Robespierre! Long live Liberty!" in the courtyard. It was the morning of the 10th Thermidor.

Three days later Madame de Beauharnais, thanks to the friendship of Madame Tallien, was free; and a month later, through the influence of Barras, such of her property as had not been sold was restored to her. The house in the Rue Neuve-des-Mathurins, No. 11, was a part of this property.

When her son, who had not told her of his intention, returned with his father's sword in his hand, and told her of the circumstances attendant upon its return, in the first burst of enthusiasm she left her house, and, having only the boulevard to cross, hastened to thank the young general, who was much astonished at her appearance.

Bonaparte held out his hand to the beautiful widow, more beautiful than ever in the mourning robes which she had worn ever since her husband's death. Then he made a sign to her to step over the map and take a seat in that part of the room which was not encumbered by it.

Josephine replied that she had come on foot and that she did not dare to put her dainty little shoe upon the map for fear of soiling it.

But Bonaparte insisted, and with the assistance of his hand, she sprang over the Gulf of Genoa, the toe of her shoe making a mark where it touched the little town of Voltri.

An armchair was standing on the other side. Josephine seated herself in it, and Bonaparte, who had remained standing near her, partly from respect and partly from admiration, put his knee on another chair and leaned with his arms on the back.

Bonaparte was at first embarrassed. He was not accustomed to society, and had rarely talked with women; but he knew that there are three things to which their hearts are always alive—country, youth, and love. He therefore talked to Madame de Beauharnais of Martinique, of her relatives, and of her husband. An hour slipped by, which, clever mathematician that he was, seemed no longer than a few minutes to him.

They spoke little of the present state of affairs, but Bonaparte noticed that Madame de Beauharnais seemed to stand in close relations with all those who were in power, or who seemed likely to attain to it, her husband having been a prominent exponent of the reactionary opinions which were then in high favor.

For her part, Madame de Beauharnais was too clear-sighted a woman not to detect, for all his innate eccentricity, the powerful intellect of the victor of the 13th Vendémiaire.

This complete and rapid success had made of Bonaparte the hero of the day. He had often been mentioned in Madame de Beauharnais's presence; and curiosity and enthusiasm had prompted her, as we have said, to pay him this visit. She found that Barras's protégé was intellectually far beyond what Barras had claimed for him, so that when her servant came to tell her that Madame Tallien was waiting for her at her house, to go, she knew where, as they had planned, she exclaimed: "But our appointment was for five o'clock."

"And it is now six," said the lackey, bowing.

"Heavens!" said she in surprise; "what shall I say to her?"

"Tell her, madame," said Bonaparte, "that your conversation charmed me so greatly that I prevailed upon you with my entreaties to give me another quarter of an hour."

"That is bad advice," said Josephine; "for in that case I should have to say what is not true in order to excuse myself."

"Let me see," said Bonaparte, anxious that she should prolong her visit for a few moments, "was Madame Tallien contemplating another 9th Thermidor? I thought the days of Robespierre were gone forever."

"If I were not ashamed to make the confession, I would tell you where we are going."

"Tell me, madame. I shall be delighted to share a secret with you, especially one which you are ashamed to confess."

"Are you superstitious?" asked Madame de Beauharnais.

"I am a Corsican, madame."

"Then you will not make fun of me. Yesterday we visited Madame Gohier, and she told us that when she was passing through Lyons ten years or more ago, she had had her fortune told by a young woman named Lenormand. Among other predictions which this fortune-teller made her, she said that she would love a man whom she could not marry, and would marry a man whom she did not love, but that after this marriage she would become very much attached to the man she had married. That has been precisely what has happened. Now she has heard that this sibyl, named Lenormand, is living in Paris in the Rue Tournon, No. 7. Madame Tallien and I were curious to see her; and she agreed to come to my house, where we are to disguise ourselves as grisettes. The appointment was, as I have said, for half-past five; it is now a quarter past six. I must go and make my excuses to Madame Tallien, change my dress, and, if she still wishes it, go with her to Mademoiselle Lenormand's. I confess that we flatter ourselves, thanks to our disguise, that we shall be able to mislead the prophetess completely."

"You have no use for a companion, a locksmith, a blacksmith, or a gunsmith, I suppose?" said Bonaparte.

"No, citizen," said Madame de Beauharnais, "I regret to say we have not. I have already been indiscreet in telling you of our plan. It would be far more so to permit you to accompany us."

"Your will be done, madame, on earth as it is in heaven," said Bonaparte.

And giving her his hand to lead her to the door, this time he avoided letting her step upon the beautiful map, upon which her foot, light as it was, had left its trace.



CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SIBYL

As she had told the young general, Madame de Beauharnais found Madame Tallien waiting for her.

Madame Tallien (Thérèse Cabarus) was, as everybody knows, the daughter of a Spanish banker. She was married to M. Davis de Fontenay, a councillor of the parliament of Bordeaux, but was soon divorced from him. This was at the beginning of '94, when the Terror was at its height.

Thérèse Cabarus wished to rejoin her father, who was in Spain, in order to escape the evils of which proscription was the least. Arrested at the gates of the city, she was brought before Tallien, who fell passionately in love with her at first sight. She made use of this passion to save a great number of victims. At this time love was the most powerful opponent of its rival, death.

Tallien was recalled, and Thérèse Cabarus followed him to Paris, where she was arrested; from the depths of her prison she brought about the 9th Thermidor, after which she was free.

It will be remembered that her first care had been to secure the liberty of her companion in prison, Josephine de Beauharnais.

From that time the two women had been inseparable. One woman only in Paris disputed the palm of beauty with them; and that woman was Madame Récamier.

This evening, as we know, they had decided to go to the fashionable sibyl, Mademoiselle Lenormand, disguised as maids, and under assumed names. In a twinkling the two great ladies were transformed into two charming grisettes.

Their lace caps fell over their eyes, and the hood of a little silk mantle hid the head; clad in short dresses of India muslin, and bravely shod with shoes with paste buckles and stockings embroidered with pink and green, which their skirts did not hide, they jumped into a hired carriage, which they had ordered to stop at the great gate of the house No. 11, Rue Neuve-des-Mathurins. Then, in a trembling voice, like that of all women who are doing something out of the ordinary, Madame de Beauharnais said to the driver: "Rue du Tournon, No. 7."

The carriage stopped at the place indicated, the driver got down from his seat, opened the door, received his fare, and knocked at the house-door, which was opened at once.

The two women hesitated an instant, as if their hearts failed them at the critical moment. But Madame Tallien urged her friend on. Josephine, light as a bird, alighted upon the pavement without touching the step; Madame Tallien followed her. They crossed the formidable threshold, and the door closed behind them.

They found themselves under a sort of porte-cochère, the arch of which extended into the court. At the further end, by the light of a reflector, they saw these words written on an outside shutter: "Mademoiselle Lenormand, bookseller."

They advanced toward this light, which revealed a short flight of four steps. They went up the four steps and came to a porter's lodge.

"Citizeness Lenormand?" inquired Madame Tallien, who, although the younger of the two, seemed on this occasion to take the initiative.

"Ground floor, left-hand door," replied the porter.

Madame Tallien went up the steps first, holding up her already short skirt, which discovered a leg that might vie with a Greek statue in shape, which had, nevertheless, condescended this evening to the grisette's garter tied below the knee. Madame de Beauharnais followed, admiring her friend's free and easy manner, but unable to emulate it. She was still only half-way up the steps when Madame Tallien rang the bell. An old servant opened the door.

The new arrivals, whose faces were more of a recommendation than their attire, were examined with the most scrupulous minuteness by the lackey, who bade them sit down in a corner of the first room. The second, which was a salon, and through which the lackey had to pass to reach his mistress, was occupied by two or three women whose rank it would have been difficult to determine, all ranks at that time being practically merged into that of the bourgeois. But to their great astonishment, the door of the second salon opened after a few moments, and Mademoiselle Lenormand herself came and spoke to them, saying:

"Ladies, be good enough to enter the salon."

The two pretended grisettes looked at each other in astonishment. Mademoiselle Lenormand was supposed to make her predictions in a state of somnambulism. Was this true, and had she, by reason of her second-sight, recognized, even without seeing them, two ladies of rank in the supposed grisettes whom the lackey had announced?

At the same time, Mademoiselle Lenormand signed to the ladies in the first salon to pass into the second room, where she told fortunes.

Madame Tallien and Madame de Beauharnais began to examine the room in which they had been left. Its principal ornaments were two portraits, one of Louis XVI. and the other of Marie-Antoinette. Notwithstanding the terrible days that had passed, and the fact that the heads of the originals had fallen upon the scaffold, the portraits had not left their places, and had not for an instant ceased to be treated with the respect which Mademoiselle Lenormand entertained for the originals.

After the portraits, the most remarkable thing in the room was a long table covered with a cloth, upon which sparkled necklaces, rings, and pieces of silverware elegantly wrought; most of the last dating from the eighteenth century. All of these trinkets had been given to the sibyl by persons to whom she had doubtless made agreeable predictions which had been fulfilled.

The door of the cabinet opened shortly, and the last person who had arrived before the two ladies was called. The friends remained alone.

A quarter of an hour passed, during which they conversed in subdued tones, then the door opened again, and Mademoiselle Lenormand came out.

"Which of you ladies wishes to come in first?" she asked.

"Can we not go in together?" asked Madame de Beauharnais quickly.

"Impossible, madame," replied the sibyl; "I have sworn never to read the cards for one person in the presence of another."

"May we know why?" asked Madame Tallien, with her customary vivacity, and we may almost say her usual indiscretion.

"Because in a portrait which I had the misfortune to draw too near to life one of two ladies whom I was receiving recognized her husband."

"Go in, Thérèse; go in," said Madame de Beauharnais, urging her friend.

"So I am always to be the one to sacrifice myself," said the latter. And then, smiling at her friend, she said: "Well, so be it; I will risk it." And she entered.

Mademoiselle Lenormand was at that time a woman of from twenty-four to twenty-nine years of age, short and stout in figure, and vainly endeavoring to disguise the fact that one shoulder was higher than the other; she wore a turban adorned with a bird of paradise. Her hair fell in long curls around her face. She wore two skirts, one over the other; one was short, scarcely falling to the knees, and pearl-gray in color; the other was longer, falling in a short train behind her, and was cherry-red.

Beside her on a cushion lay her favorite greyhound, named Aza.

The table upon which she made her calculations was nothing but a common round table covered with a green baize cloth, with drawers in front, in which the sibyl stowed her various apparatus. The cabinet was as long as the salon, but narrower. An oak bookcase ran along the wall on each side of the door, filled with books. Facing her seat was an armchair for the person who was consulting her.

Between her and the subject lay a steel rod, which was called the divining-rod. The end, pointing toward the client, was tipped with a little coiled steel serpent; the other end resembled a riding-whip.

This was what Madame de Beauharnais saw during the brief moment that the door was open to admit her friend.

Josephine took up a book, drew near to the lamp, and tried to read; but her attention was soon diverted by the sound of a bell and the entrance of another person.

It was a young man dressed in the height of the fashion adopted by the incroyables. Between his hair, which fell to a level with his eyebrows, his dog's-ears falling over his shoulders, and his neckcloth, which reached to his cheekbones, one could scarcely distinguish a straight nose, a firm and resolute mouth, and eyes as brilliant as black diamonds.

He bowed without speaking, twirled his gnarled stick three or four times around his head, hummed three false notes, as if he were just finishing a tune, and sat down in a corner.

But although this griffin's eye, as Dante would have said, was hardly visible in the corner, Madame de Beauharnais was beginning to feel uncomfortable under its stare, although the incroyable was seated at one end of the salon and she at the other. But just then Madame Tallien came out.

"Ah! my dear," she said, going straight to her friend, without seeing the incroyable, who sat in the shadow—"ah! my dear, go in quickly. Mademoiselle Lenormand is charming; just guess what she has predicted for me?"

"Why, my dear," replied Madame Beauharnais, "that you will be loved, that you will be beautiful until you are fifty years of age, and that you will have love-affairs all your life—"

And as Madame Tallien made a movement as if to say, "No, not that," she continued: "And that you will have a tall footman, a fine house, beautiful carriages, and white or bay horses."

"I shall have all that, my dear; and, furthermore, if our sibyl is to be believed, I shall be a princess."

"I congratulate you sincerely, my beautiful princess," said Josephine; "but as I do not see that there is anything left for me to ask for, and as I shall probably never be a princess, and my pride already suffers at being less beautiful than you, I will not give it further cause for envy, which might make us quarrel."

"Are you in earnest, dear Josephine?"

"No; but I will not expose myself to the inferiority which threatens me on all sides. I leave you your principality; let us run away."

She made a movement as if to go away, and to take Madame Tallien with her; but just then a hand was placed lightly on her arm, and a voice said: "Remain, madame, and perhaps when you have heard me, you will find that you have nothing to envy your friend."

Josephine greatly desired to know what was in store for her that would exalt her so that she would have no need to envy a princess. She therefore yielded, and entered Mademoiselle Lenormand's cabinet in her turn.

CHAPTER XXIX

FORTUNE-TELLING

Mademoiselle Lenormand motioned to Josephine to seat herself in the chair which Madame Tallien had just vacated, and then she drew a fresh pack of cards from a drawer—probably that the destinies of one should not influence the other. Then she looked fixedly at Madame de Beauharnais.

"You sought to deceive me," she said, "by coming to consult me in vulgar attire. I am a clairvoyant, and I saw you leave a house in the centre of Paris; I saw you finally in the anteroom when your place was in the salon, and I came to look for you. Do not seek to deceive me; answer my questions frankly, and since you have come in search of truth, tell the truth."

Madame de Beauharnais bowed.

"If you care to question me I am ready to reply."

"What animal do you like best?"

"The dog."

"What flower do you prefer?"

"The rose."

"What perfume pleases you the best?"

"That of the violet."

The sibyl placed before Madame de Beauharnais a pack of cards almost double the size of ordinary ones. These had not been invented more than a month, and were called the "great oracle."

"Let us see first where you are placed," said the sibyl.

And, turning over the pack, she separated the cards with the wand and found the consulting client; that is to say, a brunette in a white dress with a broad, embroidered flounce, and a cloak of red velvet with a long flowing train. She was placed between the eight of hearts and the ten of clubs.

"Chance has placed you well, as you see, madame. The eight of hearts has three different meanings in as many different rows. The first, which is the eight of hearts itself, represents the conjunction of the stars under which you were born. The second, an eagle carrying away a toad from a pond, over which he is hovering. The third, a female near a tomb. This is what I see, madame, in the first card. You were born under the influence of Venus and the moon. You have recently had a very satisfactory experience, almost in the nature of a triumph. Finally, this woman dressed in black near a tomb indicates that you are a widow. On the other hand, the ten of clubs promises success in an undertaking which has just begun, and of which you are scarcely cognizant. It would be impossible to find a more fortunate throw of cards."

Then, taking up the pack and shuffling them, Mademoiselle Lenormand asked Madame de Beauharnais to cut them with her left hand, and to draw fourteen cards, which she was to place in any order she chose beside the brunette, from right to left, as Orientals write.

Madame de Beauharnais obeyed, and cut and arranged the cards as requested.

Mademoiselle Lenormand followed them with her eyes, more attentively than Madame de Beauharnais, as the latter turned them.

"In truth, madame, you are fortunate," said she; "and I am convinced that you did well not to be frightened by the prediction which I made to your friend, brilliant though it was. Your first card is the five of diamonds; beside it I find the beautiful constellation of the Southern Cross, which is invisible to us here in Europe. The main subject of the card, a Greek or Mohammedan traveller, indicates that you were born either in the East or the colonies. The parrot, or the orange tree, which forms the third subject, makes me incline to the colonies. The flower, which is a veratrum, very common in Martinique, would almost justify me in saying that you were born in that island."

"You are not mistaken, madame."

"Your third card, the nine of diamonds, makes me think that you left the island when still very young. The convolvulus,

which figures on the lower part of the card, and which is the symbol of a woman seeking for something to cling to, would indicate that you left the island to be married."

"That is also true, madame," said Josephine.

"Your fourth card, which is the ten of spades, indicates the loss of your hopes; but the fruits and flowers of the saxifrage which are on the same card suggest that the disappointment was but momentary, and that a happy conclusion—probably a marriage—succeeded fears which amounted even to loss of hope."

"If you had read in the book of my own life, madame, you could not have seen more clearly."

"That encourages me," said the sibyl; "for I see such strange things in your cards that I should stop short if your denial were added to my own doubts."

"Here is the eight of spades. Achilles is dragging Hector, chained to his car, around the walls of Troy; lower down a woman is kneeling before a tomb. Your husband, like the Trojan hero, must have died a violent death, probably upon the scaffold. But here is a singular thing, on the same card: opposite the weeping woman the bones of Pelops are crossed above the talisman of the moon, which means, 'Happy fatality.' To a great misfortune will succeed good fortune which is even greater."

Josephine smiled.

"That belongs to the future and therefore I cannot answer for it."

"You have two children?" asked the sibyl.

"Yes, madame."

"A son and a daughter?"

"Yes."

"See here on the same card, the ten of diamonds, your son takes a resolution without consulting you, which is of the greatest importance, not in itself, but in its results."

"On the bottom of this card is one of the talking oaks of the forest of Dodona, as you see; Jason is lying in its shade and listening. What does he hear? The voice of the future which your son heard when he decided upon that step which he has just taken."

"The card which follows, the knave of diamonds, shows you Achilles disguised as a woman at the court of Lycomenes. The glitter of a sword will make a man of him. Is there something about a sword that has occurred between your son and some other person?"

"Yes, madame."

"Well, here at the bottom of the card is Juno, crying: 'Courage, young man, help will not be wanting!' I am not sure, but in this card, which is nothing less than that of a king of diamonds—but I think I see your son addressing a powerful soldier, and obtaining of him what he wants."

"The four of diamonds shows you yourself, madame, at the moment when your son is telling you of the fortunate result of his attempt. The flowers growing at the bottom of this card admonish you not to let yourself be overcome by difficulties, and that you will thereby reach the goal of your desires. And finally, madame, here is the eight of clubs, which positively indicates a marriage; placed as it is, next to the eight of hearts, which is the eagle soaring aloft with the toad in his talons, it indicates that this marriage will exalt you above the most eminent ranks of society."

"Then, if we still doubt, here is the six of hearts, which unfortunately is so rarely seen with the eight. Here is the eight and upon it the alchemist watching the transformation of the stone into gold; that is to say the ordinary life changing into one of nobility, honors, and a lofty position. See among these flowers a convolvulus, twining itself around a lily shorn of its blossoms; that means, madame, that you will succeed; that you, who are simply seeking a support, will succeed—how shall I tell you?—to everything that is grandest and most powerful in France, in short to the lily shorn of its blossoms; and, as indicated by the ten of clubs, that you will succeed to all this by passing across battlefields, where, as you see, Ulysses and Diomedes are carrying off the white horse of Rheseus, placed under the care of the talisman of Mars."

"There, madame, you will enjoy the respect and affection of the whole world. You will be the wife of this Hercules stifling the lion of the Nemean forest; that is to say the useful and courageous man who exposes himself to every danger."

for the good of his country. The flowers with which you are crowned are the lilac, the arum, and the immortelle, for you will represent true merit and perfect goodness."

Then, rising enthusiastically and seizing Madame de Beauharnais's hand as she fell at her feet, she said: "Madame, I know neither your name nor your rank, but I can read your future. Madame, remember me when you are—empress!"

"Empress? I? You are mad, my dear woman."

"What, madame, do you not see that your last card, the one to which the other fourteen lead, is the king of hearts, the great Charlemagne, who holds his sword in one hand and the globe in the other? Do you not see upon the same card the man of genius, who, with a book in his hand and a sphere at his feet, meditates upon the destinies of the world? And, last of all, do you not see on the two desks, placed opposite each other, the Book of Wisdom and the laws of Solon, which proves that your husband will be a legislator as well as a conqueror."

Improbable as was the prediction, the blood rushed to Josephine's head. Her eyes grew dim, her forehead was bathed with perspiration, and a shiver ran through her whole body.

"Impossible! impossible! impossible!" she murmured, and she sank back in her chair.

Then suddenly remembering that this consultation had lasted nearly an hour, and that Madame Tallien was waiting for her, she rose, tossed her purse to Mademoiselle Lenormand without looking to see how much it contained, and darted into the salon. She seized Madame Tallien by the waist and drew her away, scarcely replying to the bow which the incroyable made to the two ladies as they passed before him.

"Well?" asked Madame Tallien, stopping Josephine on the flight of steps which led down to the courtyard.

"Well," replied Madame de Beauharnais, "that woman is crazy."

"What did she predict for you?"

"It is your turn first."

"I warn you, my dear, that I have already become accustomed to her prediction," said Madame Tallien; "she said that I would be a princess."

"Well," said Josephine, "I am not yet accustomed to mine. She said that I would be an empress."

And the two false grisettes got into their carriage.

CHAPTER XXX

THE PRETENDED INCROYABLE

As we have said, the two ladies, excited over their predictions, had scarcely paid any attention to the young man who was waiting his turn.

During the long session that Madame de Beauharnais had with the sibyl, Madame Tallien had tried more than once to discover to what class of incroyable the young man in question belonged. But he, evidently little inclined to respond to her attempts at conversation, had drawn his hair over his eyes, his cravat over his chin, and his dog's-ears over his cheeks, and had settled down in his chair with a sort of grunt, like a man who would not be sorry to shorten the time of waiting by a short nap.

Madame de Beauharnais's long sitting had passed thus: Madame Tallien pretending to read, and the incroyable pretending to sleep.

But as soon as the ladies had gone out, and he had followed them with his eyes until they had disappeared, he presented himself in turn at the door of Mademoiselle Lenormand's cabinet. The appearance of this new client was so grotesque that it brought a smile to her lips.

"Mademoiselle," he said, affecting the ridiculous speech of the young dandies of the day, "will you have the goodness to tell me the fortunate or unfortunate vicissitudes which destiny has reserved for the person of your humble servant. Nor will he conceal from you that that person is so dear to him that he will learn with gratitude whatever agreeable presages you may impart to him. He must add, however, that owing to his great self-control, he will listen with equanimity to whatever catastrophes with which you may be pleased to threaten him."

Mademoiselle Lenormand looked at him anxiously for a moment. Did his indifference amount to madness, or was she dealing with one of those young men of the day who took pleasure in mocking the holiest things, and who would, therefore, have no scruple about insulting the sibyl of the Rue Tournon, firmly established though she was in the good opinion of the inhabitants of the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

"Do you wish me to cast your horoscope?" she asked.

"Yes, my horoscope—a horoscope like that which was cast at the birth of Alexander, son of Philip of Macedon. Without expecting to attain to the renown of the conqueror of Porus, and the founder of Alexandria, I intend some day to make a stir in the world. Have the goodness therefore to prepare whatever may be necessary, and to predict the best of good fortune for me."

"Citizen," said Mademoiselle Lenormand, "I employ different methods."

"Let us hear what they are," said the incroyable, thrusting his stomach forward, and slipping his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat and letting his cane dangle from the cord around his wrist.

"For example, I prophesy by the whites of eggs, the analysis of coffee grounds, spotted or algebraic cards, and I sometimes read the future by means of a cock."

"The last would suit me very well," said the young man. "But we should need a living cock, and a glassful of wheat; have you got them?"

"I have them," replied Mademoiselle Lenormand. "I also use catoptromancy at times."

"I am looking for a Venetian mirror; for, as nearly as I can remember," said the young man, "catoptromancy is performed with a Venetian mirror and a drop of water spilled upon it."

"Exactly, citizen. You seem to be well informed concerning my art."

"Bah!" said the young man. "Yes, yes; I take an occasional turn at the occult sciences."

"There is also chiromancy," observed Mademoiselle Lenormand.

"Ah! that is what I want. All the other practices are more or less diabolical, while chiromancy has never been censured by the Catholic Church, being a science founded upon principles drawn from Holy Writ and transcendental philosophy. As much cannot be said for hydromancy, you will concede, citizenship, which has to do with a ring thrown into water; nor

of pyromancy, which consists of placing the victim in the midst of a fire; of geomancy, which is performed by tracing cabalistic signs upon the ground; of capnomancy, where poppy seeds are thrown on burning coals; of coscinomancy, in which the hatchet, the sieve and the tongs are employed; nor, finally, of anthropomancy, in which human victims are sacrificed."

Mademoiselle watched her interlocutor with a certain uneasiness. Was he speaking seriously? Was he making fun of her? Or did he conceal beneath his assumed indifference a desire to remain unrecognized?

"Then you prefer chiromancy?" she asked.

"Yes," replied the incroyable; "for with chiromancy, were you the devil himself, or his wife Proserpine," and he bowed gallantly to Mademoiselle Lenormand, "I should not fear for the safety of my soul, since the patriarch Job has said (verse 7, chapter xxxvii.), 'God hath drawn lines in the hands of men in order that each may know his destiny.' And Solomon, the pre-eminently wise king, added: 'Length of life is marked in the right hand, and the lines of the left hand betoken wisdom and glory.' Finally we read in the prophet Isaiah, 'Your hand denotes that you will live a long time.' Here is mine, what does it say?"

As he spoke, the young incroyable took off his glove and extended a hand that was delicate and well-shaped, although thin and tanned by the sun. Its proportions were perfect, the fingers long and smooth; and he wore no rings.

Mademoiselle Lenormand took it and examined it carefully. Then her eyes turned from the young man's hand to his face.

"Sir," said she, "it must have cost your natural dignity much to clothe yourself as you have, and in so doing, you must have yielded, either to a great curiosity, or to the first expression of an unconquerable feeling. You are wearing a disguise and not your accustomed attire. Your hand is that of a soldier accustomed to wield the sword rather than to twirl the cane of an incroyable, or the switch of a dandy. Neither is this language you now affect natural to you. You know all of these sciences which you have mentioned, but you have learned them while studying others which you deemed more important. You have a taste for occult researches, but your future is not that of a Nicolas Flamel or a Cagliostro. You have asked in jest for a horoscope similar to the one which was cast at the birth of Alexander, son of Philip of Macedon. It is too late to cast the horoscope of your birth, but I can tell you what has happened to you since your birth, and what the future holds in store for you."

"Faith, you are right," said the young man in his natural voice, "and I confess that I am ill at ease in this disguise; neither, as you have said, am I accustomed to this language which I have just now used. Had you been deceived by my language and my attire, I should have said nothing, and would have left you with a shrug of the shoulders. The discovery which you have made in spite of my efforts to deceive you, proves to me that there is something in your art. I well know that it is tempting God," he added gloomily, "to seek to wrest from him the secrets of the future; but where is the man who feels within himself the power to achieve great things, who would not wish to aid, by a knowledge of the future, the events which life holds in store for him? You say that you will tell me of my past life. I ask but a few words on that score, being anxious rather to know the future. I repeat, here is my hand."

Mademoiselle Lenormand's eyes rested for a moment on the palm of his hand, then, raising her head, she said:

"You were born on an island, of a family which, though noble, has neither wealth nor renown. You left your country to be educated in France, you entered the service in a special branch, the artillery. You have gained a great victory, which was of immense use to your country, but for which you were poorly recompensed. For a time you thought of leaving France. Fortunately obstacles multiplied and you remained. You have just forced yourself into notoriety by a brilliant stroke which has assured you the support of the future Directory. This very day—and mark well the date—though it has been signalled by the most ordinary events alone, will become one of the most important landmarks of your life. Do you believe in my art now, and shall I continue?"

"Certainly," replied the pretended incroyable, "and that you may have every facility in your work, I will begin by showing you my real features."

At these words he took off his hat, threw aside his wig, untied his cravat, and revealed that head of bronze, of which it has been said that it seemed to have been modelled from an antique medal. He frowned slightly, brushed his hair from his temples with his hand, and his eye grew stern, resolute, almost haughty, as did his voice; and he said, no longer with the lisp of the incroyable, or the gentleness of a man addressing a woman, but with the firmness of a command, as he presented his hand to the sibyl for the third time: "Look!"

CHAPTER XXXI

"MACBETH, THOU SHALT BE KING!"

Mademoiselle Lenormand took the hand, which her client held out to her, with a feeling almost akin to veneration.

"Will you have the whole truth?" she asked, "or shall I tell you only the good and conceal the evil, as I would to one of those effeminate creatures, to whose nervous irritability you are sometimes subject?"

"Tell me all," said the young man briefly.

"See that you remember the order which you have given me," she said, emphasizing the word "order." "Your hand, which is the most perfect of any that I have ever seen, presents all the virtuous sentiments, and all the human weaknesses; it reveals at once the most heroic and the most hesitating of characters. Most of the lines of your palm dazzle by their brilliancy, while others seem to point to the darkest and most painful hours. I am about to reveal to you an enigma more difficult to read than the Theban Sphinx; for even as you will be greater than Œdipus, so will you be more unhappy. Shall I go on, or shall I stop?"

"Go on," he said.

"I obey you," and again she emphasized the word "obey."

"We will begin with the most powerful of the seven planets; all seven are impressed upon your hand, and are placed in their recognized order.

"Jupiter is at the extremity of your index finger. Let us begin with him. Perhaps some confusion will result from this method of procedure, but we will bring forth order out of chaos.

"Jupiter then in your hand is placed at the extremity of your index finger, which means that you will be the friend and the enemy of the great men of this world, and among the fortunate of this age. Notice this sign in the shape of a fan on the fourth joint of this finger; it indicates that you will forcibly levy tribute upon people and kings. See this sort of grafting on the second joint, broken at its seventh branch; that means that you will occupy in succession six positions of dignity, and that you will stop at the seventh."

"Do you know what these positions are?"

"No. All that I can tell you about them is that the last is that of Emperor of the West, which is to-day in the house of Austria.

"See that star under the grating; it betokens that you have a good genius who will watch over you until your eighth lustre, or until you are forty years old. At that time you will probably forget that Providence chose a companion for you, for you will abandon that companion, as a result of a false calculation of human prosperity. The two signs directly beneath that star, which resemble, the one a horseshoe, and the other a chessboard, indicate that after long prosperity you will inevitably fall, and from the greatest height to which man has ever attained. You will fall rather through the influence of women than the strength of men. Four lustres will be the term of your triumph and power.

"This other sign, at the foot of Jupiter, accompanied by these three other stars, indicate that during the last three years of your greatness and prosperity, your enemies will be trying to undermine you, and that three months will suffice to hurl you from your exalted position, and that the crash of your fall will resound throughout the East and the West. Shall I go on?"

"Go on!" said the young man.

"These two stars at the extremity of the middle finger, which is the finger of Saturn, indicate positively that you will be crowned in the same metropolis which has witnessed the coronations of the kings of France, your predecessors. But the sign of Saturn, placed immediately below these two stars, and governing them, is of the gloomiest import for you.

"On the second joint of this middle finger there are two signs, which are peculiar in that they seem to contradict each other. The triangle denotes a curious, suspicious man, not at all lavish of his means except to his soldiers, and who during his life will receive three wounds: the first on the thigh, the second on the heel, and the third on the little finger. The second of these signs, a star, denotes a magnanimous sovereign, a lover of the beautiful, forming gigantic projects, which are not only impossible of realization, but which none but he would be capable of conceiving.

"This line, which resembles an S, winding over the middle joint, forebodes, besides various other perils, several attempts at assassination, among which there is a prearranged explosion.

"The straight line, the letters C and X, which extend almost to the root of the finger of Saturn, betoken a second alliance, more illustrious than the first."

"But," interrupted the young man, impatiently, "this is the second or third time that you have spoken of this first alliance which is to protect the first eight lustres of my life. How am I to recognize the lady when I see her?"

"She is dark," replied the sibyl; "the widow of a fair-haired man who wore a sword and perished by the axe. She has two children, whom you will adopt for your own. In examining her face you will recognize her by two things: one is that she has a noticeable mark on one of her eyebrows, and the second that in talking she frequently raises her right hand, being accustomed to holding a handkerchief, which she carries to her mouth whenever she laughs."

"Very well," he returned, "now let us come back to my horoscope."

"See at the base of the finger of Saturn these two signs, one of which resembles a gridiron without a handle, and the other the six of diamonds.

"They predict that your second wife will destroy your happiness, and that she, unlike your first wife, will be fair and born of a race of kings.

"The figure representing the image of the sun at the end of the third joint of the ring finger, which is the finger of Apollo, proves that you will become an extraordinary personage, rising by your own merit, but especially favored by Jupiter and Mars.

"These four straight lines, placed like a palisade below this image of the sun, betoken that you will struggle in vain against a power which, unaided, will stop you in your career.

"Beneath these four straight lines we find again that serpentine line, in the form of the letter S, which has already twice predicted misfortune for you on the finger of Saturn; if the star, which is below that line, were above it instead, it would indicate that you would continue in the zenith of your power for seven lustres.

"The fourth finger of the left hand bears the sign of Mercury at the end of the third joint. This means that few men will possess such sagacity, knowledge, finesse, exactness of reasoning power and keenness of mind as you. You will bend several nations to your vast projects; you will undertake expeditions which will occasion great wonderment; you will cross deep rivers, ascend steep mountains, and traverse immense deserts. But this sign of Mercury also denotes that you will have a very abrupt and capricious temper; that this temper will create powerful enemies against you; and that in the spirit of a true cosmopolitan, tormented by lust of conquest, you will not be contented anywhere, and that sometimes you will even feel that Europe is too confined a sphere for you.

"As for this ladder which is drawn between the first and third joints of the finger of Mercury, it denotes that in the days of your power, you will carry out immense works for the embellishment of your capital as well as the other cities of your kingdom.

"And now we pass to the thumb, which is the finger of Venus.

"As you see, here is her all-powerful sign on the second joint. It announces that you will adopt children which are not your own, and that your first union will be childless, although you have had, and will have again, natural children. But as compensation, here are the three stars which are dominated by it; this is a sign that, in spite of the efforts of the enemy, surrounded by great men who supplement your genius, you will be crowned between your sixth and seventh lustre, and that the Pope himself, to gain your favor for the Church of Rome, will come from Rome to place the crown of Louis XIV. and Saint Louis upon your head and that of your wife.

"Beneath the three stars, do you see the sign of Venus and that of Jupiter? Beside them, and on the same line, do you see those numbers which are so lucky when in conjunction—9, 19, and 99? They are the proof that the East and West will clasp hands, and that the Cæsars of the house of Hapsburg will consent to ally their name with yours.

"Below those numbers we find the same sun which we have already seen on the tip of the finger of Apollo, and which indicates that, contrary to the celestial luminary, which goes from east to west, your course will be from west to east.

"Now let us go up from the first joint of this thumb to the O which crosses a bar diagonally. Well, that sign indicates disordered vision, political blindness. As for the three stars on the first joint and the sign which surmounts them, they are

only a confirmation of the prediction that women will have a great influence upon your life, and they indicate that even as happiness will come to you through a woman, so will it take flight through a woman.

"As for the four signs scattered about the palm of the hand in the form of an iron rake, one in the field of Mars, another adhering to the line of life, and the remaining two adjoining the base of the mountain of The Moon, they indicate prodigal expenditure of the blood of soldiers, but only upon the battlefield.

"The top of this forked line, divided toward the mount of Jupiter, number 8, denotes extended journeys in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Some of these journeys will be forced ones, as the X at the top of the line of life denotes, overlooking the mount of Venus. Finally, as its branches cross beneath the line of Mars, it is a sure sign of great renown, due to glorious feats of arms. In speaking to you, men will exhaust the whole vocabulary of humility and eulogy; you will be the glorious man, the man of prodigies and miracles. You will be Alexander, you will be Cæsar, you will be even greater than they; you will be Atlas bearing the world. After seeing the whole universe lighted up with your glory, you will see it black as night on the day of your death; and men, seeing that the world is out of joint, will ask, not whether a man has just died, but whether the sun has set."

The young man had listened to this prophecy with an air of gloom rather than joy; he had seemed to follow the sibyl to these heights where she had paused, fatigued, to take breath; then with her he had descended into the abyss, where, as she said, his fortune would be sunk.

He remained silent a moment after she had ceased.

"You have prophesied Cæsar's fortune for me," he said, after a pause.

"It is greater than Cæsar's," she said; "for Cæsar did not attain his end, and you will yours. Cæsar put his foot only upon the first step of the throne, and you will take your seat upon it. But do not forget the dark woman who has a mark above her right eyebrow, and who carries her handkerchief to her mouth when she smiles."

"And when shall I meet her?" asked the young man.

"You have met her to-day," replied the sibyl, "and she marked with her foot the spot where your long line of victories will begin."

It was so manifestly impossible that the sibyl could have prepared beforehand this series of undoubted truths which had taken place in the past, and the succession of incredible facts which were still buried in the future, that for the first time the young officer believed thoroughly in what she had told him. He put his hand in his pocket and drew forth a purse containing some gold-pieces; but the sibyl laid a detaining hand upon his arm.

"If I have prophesied lies," she said, "the price is too great. If, on the contrary, I have told you the truth we can settle our account only at the Tuileries. At the Tuileries, then, when you are Emperor of the French."

"So be it," replied the young man; "at the Tuileries! And if you have told me the truth, you will lose nothing by waiting."^[5]

We can vouch for the truth of this scene the more confidently because the details were given us by Mademoiselle Lenormand's friend, pupil, and confidante, Madame Moreau, who lived in the Rue du Tournon, No. 5, in the same house with the celebrated sibyl, and who, devoting herself to the same art, met with great success.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE MAN OF THE FUTURE

The 26th of October, at half-past two in the afternoon, the president of the Convention pronounced these words: "The National Convention declares that its mission is fulfilled, and that its sessions are at end." These words were followed by cries of "Long live the Republic!"

To-day, after the lapse of seventy-two years, and three generations, the man who writes these lines cannot forbear to bow his head in the presence of that memorable date.

The long and stormy career of the Convention ended with an act of clemency. It decreed that the death penalty should be abolished throughout the territory of the French Republic. It changed the name of the Place de la Révolution to the Place de la Concorde. And finally it pronounced an amnesty upon all the deeds relating to the Revolution.

It did not leave a single prisoner in the prisons who had not had a trial, nor one confined for political offences. It was very strong, very sure of itself, this assembly that was resigning its power.

O terrible Convention! stern embalmer, who didst lay the eighteenth century in its blood-stained winding-sheet, thou didst find at thy birth, on the 21st of September, 1792, Europe in arms against France, a dethroned king, a constitution annulled, an administration overthrown, a discredited paper currency, and skeletons of regiments without soldiers!

Thou didst pause a moment, and perceive that, unlike the two assemblies that had preceded thee, it was not for thee to proclaim liberty before a worn-out monarchy, but to defend liberty against all the thrones of Europe!

On the day of thy birth thou didst proclaim the Republic in the face of two opposing armies, one of which was but one hundred and fifty, and the other not more than two hundred miles from Paris. Then, in order to burn thy bridges, thou didst bring to conclusion the king's trial!

When voices rising from thine own bosom cried out, "Humanity!" thou didst reply, "Energy!"

Thou didst make thyself absolute. From the Alps to the coast of Brittany, from the ocean to the Mediterranean, thou didst lay hold of everything and say, "I will answer for everything!"

Like the minister of Louis XII., for whom there were neither friends nor family, but only enemies of France, and who struck down with the same hand a Chalais and a Marillac, a Montmorency and a Saint-Preuil, thou didst not spare thine own members. And finally, after three years of such convulsions as people had never before experienced, after days which have come down to posterity as the 21st of January, the 31st of October, the 5th of April, the 9th and 13th Thermidor, and the 13th Vendémiaire, bleeding and mutilated, thou didst lay down thy functions, handing over to the Directory safe and flourishing that France which thou didst receive from the Constituent Assembly torn asunder and compromised!

Let those who accuse thee, dare to say what would have happened if thou hadst not followed thy course, if Condé had entered Paris, if Louis XVIII. had ascended the throne, if, instead of the twenty years of Directory, the Consulate, and the Empire, there had been twenty years of restoration, twenty years of Spain instead of France, twenty years of shame instead of twenty years of glory!

Now, was the Directory worthy of the legacy bequeathed to it by its dying mother? That is the question.

The Directory must answer to posterity for its deeds even as the Convention has answered for its own.

The Directory was appointed. The five members were Barras, Rewbell, La Reveillière-Lepaux, Letourneur and Carnot. It was decided that they should take up their official residence at the Luxembourg. They did not know what was the condition of the Luxembourg. They went there to begin their sittings. They found not a single article of furniture.

"The concierge," wrote M. Thiers, "lent them a shaky table, a sheet of letter paper, and a writing-desk, with which to write their first message announcing to the two councils that the Directory was established."

They sent to the Treasury. There was not a penny there.

Barras was their chief; Carnot directed the movements of the armies; Rewbell had charge of the foreign affairs; Letourneur and La Reveillière-Lepaux of the interior administration. Buonaparte had command of the Army of Paris. A fortnight later he signed his name Bonaparte.

On the 9th of the following March, about eleven o'clock in the morning, two carriages stopped before the door of the mayoralty of the second district of Paris.

A young man about twenty-six, wearing the uniform of a general officer, descended from the first. He was followed by two witnesses.

A young woman about twenty-eight or thirty descended from the other. She was followed by her two witnesses.

The six presented themselves before citizen Charles-Théodore François, civil magistrate of the second district, who asked them the questions usually propounded to matrimonial aspirants, to which they made the customary replies. Then he ordered the following document read to them, which they afterward signed:

"The 19th Ventôse, in the Year IV. of the Republic."

"Contract of marriage between Napolione Bonaparte, general-in-chief of the army of the interior, aged *twenty-eight* years, born at Ajaccio, in the department of Corsica, residing in Paris, Rue d'Antin, son of Charles Bonaparte, gentleman, and Lætitia Ramolini:

"And Marie-Rose-Josephine Tascher, aged twenty-eight years, born in the island of Martinique, in the Windward Islands, residing in Paris, Rue Chantereine, daughter of Gaspard-Joseph de Tascher, captain of dragoons, and his wife Rose-Claire Desvergers de Sanois.

"I, Charles-Théodore François, civil magistrate of the second district of the canton of Paris, after having in the presence of these parties and their witnesses, read;

"1st. The certificate of birth of Napolione Bonaparte, which states that he was born on the *5th of February*, 1768, of the lawful marriage of Charles Bonaparte and Lætitia Ramolini;

"2d. The certificate of birth of Marie-Rose-Josephine Tascher, which states that she was born on the 23d of June, of the lawful marriage of Joseph-Gaspard de Tascher and of Rose-Claire Desvergers de Sanois;

"The certificate of death of Alexandre-François-Marie de Beauharnais, being taken into consideration, which states that he died on the 7th Thermidor, in the year II., married to Marie-Rose-Josephine de Tascher;

"Also that the certificate of publication of said marriage was duly posted without opposition during the time prescribed by law;

"And also that Napolione Bonaparte and Marie-Rose-Josephine Tascher had declared aloud that they took each other for husband and wife—I did pronounce Napolione Bonaparte and Marie-Rose-Josephine Tascher to be husband and wife.

"And this in the presence of the adult witnesses hereafter named, to wit: Paul Barras, member of the executive Directory, living at the Luxembourg; Captain Jean Lemarrois, aide-de-camp, living in the Rue des Capucines; Jean-Lambert Tallien, member of the Corps-Legislatif, living at Chaillot, and Etienne-Jacques-Jerôme Calmelets, lawyer, living in the Rue de la Place Vendôme, No. 207, all of whom have signed with the principals, as I have done, after this reading."

Indeed, one may see the six signatures of M.-R.-J. Tascher, of Napolione Bonaparte, of Tallien, of Barras, of J. Lemarrois, Jr., of E. Calmelets, and of C.-T. François, at the foot of the certificate we have just quoted.

The remarkable thing about this certificate, however, is that it contains two false statements. Bonaparte was there alleged to be two and a half years older than he really was, and Josephine two years younger than she was. She was born on the 23d of June, 1763, and Bonaparte on the 15th of August, 1769.

On the day after their marriage Bonaparte was appointed commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy. This was Barras's wedding gift.

On the 26th of March, Bonaparte arrived at Nice with two thousand louis in the box of his carriage, and a million in drafts.

Jourdan and Moreau had been given a magnificent army of seventy thousand men. But the Directory only dared trust

Bonaparte with thirty thousand men, who were famished, in want of everything, reduced to the last extremity, without clothes, shoes or pay, and most of the time without provisions, but who nevertheless bore all their privations, even hunger, with admirable fortitude.

His officers were Masséna, a young Niçard, headstrong and obstinate, but full of happy inspirations; Augereau, whom we have already met at Strasbourg, where we saw him handle the foil against Eugene, and the musket against the Austrians; La Harpe, a banished Swiss; Serrurier, a soldier of the old school, painstaking and brave; and finally Berthier, the chief of his staff, whose good qualities he had already divined—qualities which improved every day.

With his thirty thousand soldiers he had to fight sixty thousand, twenty thousand Piedmontese under General Collé, and forty thousand Austrians under General Beaulieu. These generals looked with disdain at the young general, their junior in years, who it was said owed his position to Barras's patronage—small, thin and proud, with an Arab complexion, piercing eyes and Roman features.

As for the soldiers, they responded to the first words that he spoke to them; it was the kind of talk they needed. He said:

"Soldiers, you are poorly fed, and almost naked; the government owes you much, but it can do nothing for you now. Your courage and patience are worthy of all honor; but if you remain here they will procure neither profit nor glory. I am about to lead you to the most fertile plains in the world. You will find great cities and beautiful provinces there; you will find riches, honor, and glory. Follow me!"

That same day he distributed four gold louis to the generals, who had not seen gold for years, and removed his headquarters to Albenga. He was eager to reach Voltri, which was the place that Josephine had marked with her foot the first time that she had called upon him.

He reached Arenza the 11th of April.

Would he meet the enemy? Would he obtain this pledge of his future fortune?

As he ascended the slope of Arenza, at the head of the division La Harpe, which formed the advance guard, he uttered a cry of joy; he had just seen a column leaving Voltri. It was Beaulieu and the Austrians.

They fought for five days, at the end of which time Bonaparte was master of the Valley of the Bormida. The Austrians, defeated at Montenotte and Dego, retreated toward Acqui, and the Piedmontese, after losing the passes of Millesime, fell back upon Ceva and Mondovi.

Master of all the roads, with nine thousand prisoners in his train, who were to be sent to France to herald his first victory, from the heights of Monte Remonto he pointed out to his soldiers the beautiful plains of Italy, which he had promised them. He showed them all the rivers which empty into the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, and pointing to a gigantic mountain covered with snow, he exclaimed: "Hannibal crossed the Alps; we have turned them."

Thus we see that Hannibal naturally presented himself to his mind as a medium of comparison. Later it was Cæsar. Later still it was Charlemagne.

We have witnessed the birth of his fortune. Let us leave the conqueror at the first station in his journey across the world. He is fairly started on the road to Milan, Cairo, Vienna, Berlin, Madrid, and, alas! to Moscow.

THE EIGHTEENTH FRUCTIDOR

CHAPTER I

A GLANCE AT THE PROVINCES

On the evening of the 28th of May, 1797, at the moment when, his glorious campaign in Italy finished, Bonaparte was enthroned with Josephine at Montebello, surrounded by ministers from foreign courts; when the Corinthian horses, having descended from the Duomo, and the Lion of Saint Mark, having fallen from its column, were on their way to Paris; when Pichegru, relieved from service on account of vague suspicions, had just been made president of the Five Hundred, and Barbé-Marbois president of the Ancients—a horseman, who was travelling, as Virgil says, "under the friendly silence of the moon" ("Per amica silentia lunæ"), and who was trotting upon a powerful horse along the road from Mâcon to Bourg, left that road a little above the village of Polias. He jumped, or rather made his horse jump, the ditch which separated the road from the plowed fields, and followed the banks of the river Veyle for about five hundred yards, where he was not liable to meet either villager or traveller. There, doubtless no longer fearing to be recognized or noticed, he allowed his coat to slip from his shoulders to the saddle, thereby discovering a belt in which he carried two pistols and a hunting-knife. Then he lifted his hat and wiped his perspiring forehead. The traveller was a young man of twenty-eight or nine years of age, handsome, distinguished, and well-built; and it was evident that he was prepared to repel force by force if any one should have the temerity to attack him.

And, by the way, the precaution which had caused him to put a pair of pistols in his belt was by no means an unwarranted one. The Thermidorean reaction, suppressed in Paris on the 13th Vendémiaire, had taken refuge in the provinces, where it had assumed gigantic proportions. Lyons was become its headquarters; on one side, by way of Nîmes, it stretched out its hand to Marseilles, and on the other, by way of Bourg in Bresse, as far as Besançon. For further information regarding this reaction we might refer our reader to our romance "The Companions of Jehu," or to Charles Nodier's "Souvenirs de la Revolution et de l'Empire"; but as the reader will probably not have either of these two works at hand, we will briefly reproduce here what is necessary for our purpose.

It was not to be wondered at that the Thermidorean reaction, suppressed in the first capital of France, had taken up its abode in the second, with branches at Marseilles and Besançon. What Lyons suffered after the revolt is well known. The guillotine was too slow, and Collot d'Herbois and Fouché supplemented it with grape and canister. There were few families at that time, belonging either to the rich commercial classes or the nobility, who had not lost one or more of its members. The time had now come to avenge the lost father, brother or son; and they were avenged openly, publicly, in broad daylight. "You caused the death of my father, my son, or my brother," they would say to the informer, and then they would immediately strike him down.

"Speculation in regard to murder," says Nodier, "was largely indulged in among the upper classes. There, secrets of murder were recounted in the salons which would have terrified the galleys. Men played *Charlemagne* with death for the stakes, without even taking the trouble to lower their voices when they discussed their plans of killing. The women, sweet alleviators of all the passions of men, took part in these dreadful discussions of death. Since horrible hags no longer wore guillotines for ear-rings, 'adorable furies,' as Corneille would have said, wore daggers for breast-pins. If you objected on sentimental grounds to these frightful excesses, they would take you to the Brotteaux and make you tread, in spite of yourself, upon the elastic springy soil, saying: 'Our relatives are there.' What a picture do these exceptional times present, whose nameless, indefinable character cannot be expressed by the facts themselves, so inadequate are words to reproduce the unheard of confusion of ideas, so antipathetic in themselves, the union of the most refined methods with implacable fury, the horrifying compact between the doctrines of humanity and deeds worthy of cannibalism. How can we convey an adequate impression of this impossible time when prison-cells did not protect the prisoners, when the executioner, who came in search of his victim, found, to his astonishment, that he had been preceded by the assassin—this never-ending 2d of September, renewed every day by respectable young men who had just left a salon, and who were expected in a boudoir?

"It was, it must be admitted, a localized monomania—a craving for rage and murder which had sprung into life under the wings of revolutionary harpies; an appetite for larceny, sharpened by confiscations; a thirst for blood, inflamed by the sight of blood. It was the frenzy of a generation nourished, like Achilles, upon the marrow of wild animals; a generation which had no model or ideal other than Schiller's brigands and the free-booters of the Middle Ages. It was the sharp irresistible desire to renew society by the means which had destroyed it—crime. It was the inevitable result of the immutable tendency of compensation in remarkable times; the Titans after Chaos; Python after the deluge; a flock of vultures after the battle; the unerring law of retaliation for those unaccountable scourges which demand death for death,

corpse for corpse, which pays itself with usury, and which Holy Writ counts among the treasures of Providence.

"The unexpected amalgamation of these bands, whose object was at first unknown, exhibited at first in a slight degree the inevitable confusion of ranks, conditions, and persons which is noticeable in all factions and parties which are the outgrowth of a disorganized society; but there was less in this case than had ever been seen before. That portion of the lower classes which participated in the movement did not lack the varnish of manner which is the result of expensive vices; an aristocratic populace which ran from one debauch to another, and from one excess to another, in the wake of the nobility of name and fortune, as if to prove that there is nothing more facile of emulation than a bad example. The remainder concealed beneath a most refined exterior a more odious depravity, because it had to break down the barriers of conventionality and education. Never before had so many assassins in silk stockings been seen; and it would have been a great mistake to imagine that luxurious habits existed in an inverse ratio to ferocity of character. Pitiless examples of mad fury were no less common among men of the world than among men of the people, and death was found to possess no less cruel refinements when inflicted by the dagger of the dandy than when inflicted by the knife of the butcher.

"The proscribed had at first eagerly sought the shelter of the prisons as a refuge. When this melancholy bulwark was destroyed, like everything else that men had formerly held sacred—like the churches and the tombs—the administration endeavored to provide for the safety of the victims by sending them out of the provinces. To protect them from private vengeance, the authorities sent them sixty or eighty miles away from their wives and children, among men who knew neither their names nor their station. The fatal move only resulted in changing the place of sepulchre. These parties in death exchanges delivered their prey from one department to another with the regularity of commercial transactions. Never had business-like habits been thus degraded to horrible traffic. Nor were these barbarous drafts, payable in men's heads, protested when they came due. As soon as the letter of advice arrived they would coolly balance debits and credits, and carry forward the balances, and the check drawn in blood would be honored at sight.

"This spectacle, the very idea of which is revolting to the soul, was often renewed. Picture to yourself one of those long carts with racks in which animals are taken to the shambles, and hurled upon them in confusion, men, their hands and feet securely tied with cords, their heads hanging down, swaying with each jolt of the cart, panting for breath, in despair and terror, for crimes of which the greatest was an excited outburst which had spent itself in threatening words. Do not imagine for a second that the feast of the martyrs or the expiatory honors of the sacrifice were prepared for them on their return, or that they were even allowed the empty satisfaction of offering for a moment an impossible resistance to an attack without peril, as in the arenas of Constantius and Gallus. The assassins surprised them as they lay; and they were murdered in their bonds, and the club, reddened with blood, continued to play upon their bodies long after they had ceased to feel."

Nodier once saw and described to me a septuagenarian noted for his gentleness of manner and that scrupulous courtesy which is esteemed above all else in provincial salons; one of those men of breeding who are becoming almost extinct, and who used to make one visit to Paris to pay their court to the minister, and to be present at the king's card-party and hunting-party, and who owed to this happy memory the privilege of dining from time to time with the *intendant*, and of giving their opinion on important occasions upon questions of etiquette. Nodier saw him—while women looked on calmly holding their children in their arms, and while the latter clapped their little hands—Nodier saw him, and I quote his very words, "wearying his withered old arm striking a corpse with his gold-headed cane, in which the assassins had neglected to extinguish the last spark of life, and which had just betrayed its agony by a final convulsion."

And now that we have tried to give some idea of the state of the country through which the traveller was passing, no wonder will be felt at the precautions which he had deemed advisable to take, nor at the attention he paid to every turn of the country, with which he seemed wholly unfamiliar. In fact, he had not followed the banks of the Veyle for more than a mile and a half before he reined in his horse, stood up in his stirrups, and, leaning over his saddle, tried to pierce the darkness, which had deepened since a cloud had passed over the face of the moon. He began to despair of finding his way without being forced to secure the services of a guide, either at Montech or at Saint-Denis, when a voice, coming apparently from the depths of the river, startled him, so unexpected was it. It said in the most cordial tone: "Can I assist you in any way, citizen?"

"Faith, yes," replied the traveller; "and as I cannot come to you, not knowing where you are, perhaps you will be so good as to come to me, since you apparently do know where I am."

And thus speaking he covered his pistols, and the hand which was playing with them, with his cloak.

CHAPTER II

THE TRAVELLER

The traveller had not been mistaken; the voice did come from the river. A shadow slowly ascended the bank, and in a moment stood at the horse's head, with one hand resting on the bridle. The rider, apparently annoyed by this familiarity, pulled his horse back a step or two.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, citizen," said the new-comer, "I did not know it was forbidden to touch your horse."

"It is not forbidden," said the traveller; "but you know at night, and in these times, it is advisable to converse at a certain distance."

"The deuce! I cannot distinguish what is advisable from what is not. You seemed unable to find your way; I saw it, and I said to myself, as I am a good fellow, 'Here is a Christian who does not seem to know his way about, so I will direct him.' You called to me to come to you, and here I am. You do not need me; good-by!"

"Your pardon, friend," said the other, restraining him with a gesture, "the movement of my horse was an involuntary one. I do really need you, and you can do me a service."

"What is it? Tell me. Oh! I bear no malice."

"Do you belong to this region?"

"I come from Saint-Rémy, near by. You can see the church from here."

"Then you know the neighborhood?"

"I should think so. I am a fisherman by trade. There is not a run of water for thirty miles around into which I have not cast my lines."

"Then you must know the abbey of Seillon?"

"Do I know the abbey of Seillon! I should think so. But I can't say as much for the monks."

"And why can't you say as much for the monks?"

"Why, because they have been driven out since 1797, of course."

"Then to whom does the Chartreuse belong?"

"To no one."

"What? A farm, a convent, a forest of ten thousand acres, and three thousand acres of land besides, here in France, which belongs to no one?"

"They belong to the Republic, which amounts to the same thing."

"Then the Republic does not cultivate the land which it confiscates?"

"As if it had the time! It has plenty of other things to do, has this Republic."

"What has it to do?"

"It has to make a new skin."

"True—it is putting on its third. Do you bother your head with such things?"

"Oh! a little in my spare time. Our neighbors of the Jura have sent the Republic General Pichegru, just the same."

"Yes."

"They can't have liked that very well over yonder. But here I am chattering and wasting your time. After all, though, if you are going to Seillon, you need not hurry."

"Why not?"

"Why, because there is no one there."

"No one?"

"The deuce, not unless it be the ghosts of the old monks, and they don't appear until midnight, so you will have to wait."

"Are you sure, my friend," persisted the traveller, "that there is *no one* at the abbey of Seillon?" And he emphasized the words.

"I passed there yesterday, when I was carrying some fish to Madame de Montrevel at the Château des Noires-Fontaines; there was not even a cat there." Then he added emphatically: "They were all priests of Baal, so there is not much harm done."

The traveller started, more visibly than at first.

"*Priests of Baal?*" he asked, looking fixedly at the fisherman.

"Yes, and unless you come from a certain king of Israel whose name I have forgotten—"

"From King Jehu, you mean, do you not?"

"I am not sure; it was a king who was consecrated by a prophet—named—named—What was the name of the prophet who consecrated King Jehu?"

"Elisha," responded the traveller, without hesitation.

"That is it. But he consecrated him on one condition. What was that condition? Help me to remember."

"That he punish the crimes of the house of Ahab and Jezebel."

"The deuce! Tell me about it at once;" and he held out his hand to the traveller.

The traveller and the fisherman gave each other a final sign of recognition, which left neither of them in doubt that they both belonged to the same association. However, they did not question each other as to their personal affairs, nor as to the work which they both had in hand, the one in going to the abbey of Seillon, the other in setting his lines and tents. But the young fisherman said:

"I am sorry that I am kept here by superior orders; if it were not for that I would gladly serve as your guide; but I cannot return to the Chartreuse until they have given me the signal. But there is no longer any need to deceive you. You see those two black masses of which one is higher than the other? The higher one is the town of Bourg; the lower the village of Saint-Denis. Pass between the two at an equal distance, and continue on your way until you are stopped by the bed of the Reissouse. You can cross it, for the water will scarcely reach to your horse's knees; then you will see a great black curtain before you. That is the forest."

"Thanks," said the traveller; "once in the forest, I know what to do."

"Even if they do not reply to your signal from the forest?"

"Yes."

"Well, go then, and good luck to you."

The two young men shook hands once again, and the young fisherman descended the bank with the same rapidity with which he had ascended it.

The traveller mechanically stretched out his neck to see what had become of him. He was invisible. Then the traveller gathered up his reins, and as the moon had come out and he had an open field to cross, he put his horse to a gallop, and was soon between Bourg and Saint-Denis.

The clock struck in both places at the same time. The traveller counted eleven strokes.

After crossing the road from Lyons to Bourg, the traveller found himself, as the fisherman had said, on the banks of a little river. His horse reached the other side with two strides, and when there he saw before him a plain about two hundred yards wide, bounded by a dark line, which he had been told was the forest. He spurred his horse straight for it.

Ten minutes later he was riding along a country road which skirted the forest in its whole length. There he stopped a moment and looked around him. He did not hesitate to give the signal agreed upon, but he wished to make sure that he was alone. The silence of the night is at times so intense that the most daring men respect it, unless they are forced to break it. For a moment then, as we have said, our traveller looked and listened, but he neither saw nor heard anything.

He put his hand to his mouth and whistled thrice with the handle of his whip, the first and last being strong and resonant, the second tremulous, like a boatswain's whistle. The sound was lost in the depths of the forest, but no sound, either similar or dissimilar, replied to it. While he listened, midnight struck at Bourg, and was repeated by all the clocks of the neighborhood. The traveller repeated the signal a second time, and again silence was his only answer.

Then he seemed to make up his mind, and following the country road until he came to one at right angle with it, he resolutely plunged into the latter; ten minutes later he came to another, which crossed it again, and following this crossroad, he bore to the left, and five minutes later was out of the forest.

A dark mass rose before him some two hundred yards away, which was doubtless the goal of his journey. As he approached it he studied certain details to make sure that this was really the old Chartreuse before him.

At last he stopped before a great portal surmounted by three statues, those of the Virgin, of Our Lord, and of Saint John the Baptist. The statue of the Virgin, placed directly over the door, formed the apex of the triangle. The two others came down to the cross-piece, forming the branch of the stone cross, in which a double door of massive oak was set, which, more fortunate than certain other portions of the frontal, and more particularly the windows on the first floor, seemed to have survived the ravages of time.

"Here it is," said the traveller; "and now to see which of the three statues is that of Saint John."

CHAPTER III

THE CHARTREUSE OF SEILLON

The traveller found the statue he sought standing in the niche at the right of the great door. He brought his horse close to the wall, and standing up in his stirrups, he reached the base of the pedestal of the statue; he slipped his hand into it, felt a ring, drew it to him, and guessed at rather than heard the tinkling of a little bell. This he repeated three times. After the third time he listened. He thought he heard a hesitating step approach the door.

"Who rang?" asked a voice.

"He who comes in the name of the prophet," replied the traveller.

"What prophet?"

"He who has left his mantle to his disciples."

"What is his name?"

"Elisha."

"Who is the king of Israel whom the children of Israel must obey?"

"Jehu."

"What is the house they are to exterminate?"

"That of Ahab."

"Are you a prophet or a disciple?"

"I am a disciple, but I have come to be made a prophet."

"Then welcome to the House of the Lord."

Scarcely had these words been uttered than the iron bars which held the door were noiselessly removed, the bolts shot as noiselessly back into their sockets, and the door opened silently, as if by magic.

The rider and his horse disappeared beneath the arch. The door closed behind them. The man who had opened it so slowly and closed it so quickly approached the new-comer as he dismounted.

The latter looked curiously at him. He was dressed in the long white robes of the Carthusian monks, and his hood entirely concealed his head. He took the horse's bridle, but evidently more as a favor than as a duty. In the meantime the traveller unfastened his valise from the saddle, and drawing his pistols from their holsters, put them in his belt with the others.

The traveller glanced around him, and seeing no light and hearing no sound, he asked: "Are the Companions absent?"

"They have gone on an expedition," replied the brother.

"Do you expect them back to-night?"

"I hope for them to-night, but I scarcely expect them before to-morrow night."

The traveller reflected for a moment. Their absence seemed to disturb him.

"I cannot lodge in the town," said he; "I should be afraid of being noticed, if not recognized. Can I wait here for the Companions?"

"Yes, if you will give me your word of honor not to attempt to go away."

"You have it."

In the meantime the robe of a second monk appeared in the shadow, growing whiter as he approached the spot where they were standing. He was doubtless a Companion of a lower order, for the first one tossed the horse's bridle to him, telling him to take the horse to the stable, more in the way of command than of request. Then, holding out his hand to the traveller, he said: "You understand why we have no lights. This monastery is supposed to be uninhabited, or at least inhabited by ghosts only; a light would betray us. Take my hand and follow me."

The traveller removed his glove and took the monk's hand. It was a soft hand, evidently unused to all labors which deprive this member of its pristine, aristocratic appearance. In the circumstances in which the traveller found himself everything was of importance. He perceived at once that he had to do with a man of innate good breeding, and followed him without hesitation. After several turns in corridors that were perfectly dark, they entered a rotunda which was lighted from above. This was evidently the dining-room of the Companions. It was lighted by candles placed in candelabra on the walls. A fire was burning in a large fireplace, fed by dry wood, which made little or no smoke.

The monk handed the traveller a chair, and said: "If our brother is weary, let him rest; if our brother is hungry, supper will be served him; if he wishes to sleep, he will be shown to his bed."

"I accept them all," said the traveller, stretching out his shapely and powerful limbs. "The chair because I am weary, the supper because I am hungry, the bed because I am sleepy. But with your permission, my very dear brother, we will take them in turn."

He threw his broad-brimmed hat upon the table, and passing his hand through his wavy hair, he revealed a high forehead, beautiful eyes, and a serene expression. The monk who had led the horse to the stable now entered, and in answer to his companion's questions said that he had given it fresh straw and that its manger was full of hay. Then, in obedience to an order, he laid a napkin at the end of the table and placed upon it a bottle of wine, a glass, a cold chicken, a pie, a plate, a knife, and a fork.

"Whenever you like, my brother," said the monk, pointing to the laden table.

"At once," said the traveller. And without rising from his chair he drew up to the table.

He bravely attacked the chicken, of which he took first the leg and then the wing upon his plate. Then came the pie, of which he ate a slice, while he sipped his wine. The monk, in the meantime, stood quietly a few steps behind him. The monk was not inquisitive and the traveller was hungry, so neither of them uttered a word. When the meal was finished, the traveller drew his watch from his pocket.

"Two o'clock," he said; "still two hours before daylight." Then, addressing the monk, he asked: "If our Companions do not come to-night we need not expect them before to-morrow night, I suppose?"

"Probably not," replied the monk; "save in cases of absolute necessity our Companions never travel by day."

"Well," said the traveller, "I will wait one of these two hours; if they have not returned by three o'clock you may show me to my room. In the meantime, if you have anything to do, do not disturb yourself about me. You belong to a silent order and I never chatter except with women. You have none here, have you?"

"No," replied the monk.

"Well, then, go about your business if you have any, and leave me to my thoughts."

The monk bowed and withdrew, but before he went he placed a second bottle of wine upon the table. The guest acknowledged the attention with a bow, and mechanically continued to sip his wine and nibble his crust of pie.

"If this is the ordinary fare of our Carthusians," he thought, "I do not pity them. Pomard for every-day wine, a chicken (to be sure we are in the country of chickens), and snipe pie! However, there is no dessert."

The thought had hardly shaped itself in his mind when the monk, who had already served both horse and rider, entered, bearing on a dish a fine slice of Sassenage cheese dotted with green, the invention of which, it is said, dates from the fairy Melusine. Without being a gourmand, the traveller, as we have seen, seemed quite able to appreciate a good supper. He did not say with Brillat-Savarin, "A good meal without cheese is like a woman without an eye," but doubtless he thought so.

An hour passed while he finished his wine and picked up the crumbs of the cheese with the point of his knife. The monk had left him alone, and he was consequently able to devote himself to this double occupation. He drew out his watch. It was three o'clock.

He looked for a bell but found none. He was on the point of striking his glass with his knife, when it occurred to him that this would be taking a great liberty with the good monks who had treated him so hospitably.

Therefore, wishing to keep the promise he had made himself of going to bed, he laid his weapons on the table, that he might not be suspected of breaking his word, and bareheaded, with only his hunting knife at his side, he passed out into the corridor by which he had entered. Half-way down he met the monk who had received him.

"Brother," said the monk, "we have seen two signals announcing that the Companions are approaching; they will be here in five minutes. I was just on my way to tell you."

"Well," said the traveller, "let us go to meet them."

The monk made no objection. He turned back and entered the courtyard followed by the stranger. The second monk opened the double door as he had done for the traveller. The door once open, the gallop of several horses was plainly discernible.

"Make room," said the monk to the traveller, drawing him aside against the wall.

At the same moment a whirlwind of men and horses swept under the arch with a noise like that of thunder.

The traveller thought for a moment that the Companions were pursued, but he was mistaken.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRAITOR

The door closed behind them. Daylight had not yet come, but the darkness was less profound. The traveller was surprised to see that the Companions had a prisoner with them. His hands were tied behind his back, and he was fastened to a horse which two of the Companions were leading. These three had entered first and had galloped to the end of the courtyard. Two by two the others had followed and had surrounded them. All had then dismounted. The prisoner had remained on horseback for a moment; then they had taken him down.

"Let me speak to Captain Morgan," said the traveller to the monk who had attended him. "He must know at once that I am here."

The monk went and whispered a few words in the leader's ears, who hastened to the traveller's side.

"From whom do you come?" he asked.

"Shall I use the ordinary formula," asked the traveller, "or shall I simply tell you from whom I really come?"

"Since you are here, you have probably satisfied all requirements. Tell me who sent you."

"General Roundhead."

"You have a letter from him?"

"Here it is." And the traveller put his hand to his pocket, but Morgan stopped him.

"Later," said he. "First we must try a traitor. Take the prisoner to the council-chamber," he added.

Just then they caught the gallop of a second troop of horsemen. Morgan listened attentively.

"Those are our brothers," said he; "open the door."

The door was opened.

"Draw back!" cried Morgan.

And a second company of four men entered almost as rapidly as the first.

"Have you the prisoner?" cried their leader.

"Yes," replied the Companions of Jehu with one accord.

"And you," asked Morgan, "have you the report?"

"Yes," replied the four with one voice.

"Then all is well," replied Morgan, "and justice will be done."

This is what had happened:

As we have said, several bands, known by the name of Companions of Jehu, or Avengers, and sometimes by both, scoured the country from Marseilles to Besançon. One had its headquarters in the neighborhood of Avignon, a second in the Jura, and a third, as we have seen, in the old Chartreuse of Seillon.

As all these young men belonged to families residing in the neighborhood, as soon as each undertaking was accomplished, whether or not successfully, they returned to their respective homes. A quarter of an hour later our pillager of diligences, with his hat perched over his ear, his eyeglass in his eye, and his stick in his hand, was walking through the town asking what had happened, and marvelling at the incredible insolence of these fellows to whom nothing was sacred, not even the cash of the Directory. Now, how could young men, some of whom were rich, and all of whom were connected with the ruling powers of the neighborhood, be suspected of highway robbery? Nor were they suspected—though, had they been, no one would have taken it upon himself to denounce them.

However, the government was much annoyed to see its money turned from its original destination—the coffers of the Directory at Paris—into those of the Chouans in Brittany. They therefore decided to play a trick upon their enemies.

In one of the diligences used to convey money, they placed seven or eight gendarmes dressed as citizens, who had sent

their pistols and carbines beforehand to the diligence, and who had received express orders to take one of the outlaws alive. The thing had been planned so cleverly that the Companions of Jehu had heard nothing about it. The vehicle, with the modest appearance of an ordinary diligence—that is to say, filled with honest bourgeois—ventured into the pass of Cavaillon, and was stopped by eight masked men. A sharp discharge of firearms from within the coach disclosed the trick to the Companions, who, not desirous of entering into a profitless struggle, set off at a gallop, and, thanks to the excellence of their horses, soon disappeared. But one horse had his leg broken by a ball, and fell on his rider. The horseman, held down by the animal, could not escape, and the gendarmes thus fulfilled the double duty of defending the government money, and of capturing one of those who sought to lay hands on it.

Like the old free-booters, like the Illuminati of the eighteenth century, like the Freemasons of modern times, the members of this society, in order to become affiliated with it, underwent brutal tests, and took blood-curdling oaths. One of these oaths was never to betray a Companion, no matter what torture might be inflicted. If the name of a Companion escaped him, or if, weakness overcoming him, any facts escaped his lips, then the Companions, taking the place of that justice which granted mercy or softened the penalty as a reward for his treachery, had ordained that the first of their number who should meet him was justified in burying his dagger in the traitor's heart!

Now the prisoner taken on the road from Marseilles, whose assumed name was Hector and whose real name was Fargas, after having resisted promises as well as threats for a long time, finally weary of prison life, and tortured with loss of sleep—the worst of all tortures—and being known by his real name, had ended by confessing and naming his accomplices.

But as soon as this became known, the judges were overwhelmed by such a deluge of threatening letters and remarks that they resolved to conduct the trial at the other end of France, and had chosen for that purpose the little town of Nantua, at the furthest extremity of the Department of the Ain.

But at the same time that the prisoner was removed to Nantua, with every precaution taken for his safety, the Companions of Jehu at the Chartreuse of Seillon received word of the betrayal and the removal of the traitor.

"It is for you, the most devoted of our brothers," they were told—"it is for Morgan, the most venturesome and daring of us all, to save the Companions by destroying the report which accuses them, and likewise to make a terrible example of the person of the traitor. Let him be tried, condemned and executed, and exposed to the gaze of all with the avenging poniard in his breast."

This was the terrible mission which Morgan had just accomplished. He had gone with ten of his comrades to Nantua. Six of them, after having gagged the sentinel, had knocked at the prison door and forced the keeper at the pistol's point to open the gate. Once inside, they had learned which was Fargas's cell, and, accompanied by the keeper and the jailer, they had gone to it, locked in the two officials, bound the young man on a horse, which they had brought with them, and had set off at a gallop.

The other four, in the meantime, had seized the clerk, had forced him, at the dead of night, to admit them to the registry, of which he had the key, as he sometimes worked there all night, when there was great stress of business. There they had compelled him to surrender all the court records, together with the interrogatories, which contained the charges signed with the prisoner's name. Then, to save the clerk, who begged them not to ruin him, and who had perhaps not made all possible resistance, they emptied a number of boxes, set fire to them, shut the door, returned the key to the clerk, who was then free to return home, and set off at a gallop themselves with the papers in their possession.

It is needless to say that all who had taken part in this expedition had worn masks.

This is why the second troop, when they entered the courtyard of the Chartreuse, had asked: "Have you the prisoner?" and why the first troop, after replying in the affirmative, had asked: "Have you the report?" And this is also the reason why Morgan had remarked subsequently: "Then all is well, and justice will be done!"

CHAPTER V

THE JUDGMENT

The prisoner was a young man of twenty-two or three years of age, who resembled a woman rather than a man, so slender and fair was he. He was bareheaded and in his shirt sleeves, with pantaloons and boots. The Companion had seized him in his cell just as he was and had hurried him away without allowing him an instant's reflection.

His first thought had been that he was rescued. These men who had entered his cell were beyond question Companions of Jehu; that is to say, they were men who held the same opinions and belonged to the same band as himself. But when he found that they had bound his hands, and when he saw their eyes flashing angrily through their masks, he realized that he had fallen into hands far more terrible than those of his judges—the hands of those whom he had betrayed—and that he could hope for nothing from comrades whom he had been willing to denounce.

On the way he had not asked a single question and no one had spoken to him. The first words he heard from the lips of his judges were the ones they had just pronounced. He was very pale, but this pallor was the only sign of emotion he displayed.

At Morgan's command the pretended monks crossed the cloister. The prisoner walked first between two of them, each holding a pistol in his hand.

The cloister crossed, they passed into the garden. This procession of the twelve marching silently along in the darkness had something terrifying about it. They approached the door of the subterranean vault. One of the two who were walking with the prisoner raised a stone, disclosing a ring beneath it, by means of which he lifted a flagstone which concealed the entrance to a staircase.

The prisoner hesitated a moment, so closely did the entrance of the vault resemble that of a tomb. The two monks who walked beside him descended first; then from a groove in the stone they took two torches which had been placed there for those who might have occasion to enter the vault. They struck a light, kindled the torches, and uttered the one word: "Descend!"

The prisoner obeyed. The monks disappeared to the last man in the vault. They walked on for several moments until they reached a grating; one of the monks drew a key from his pocket and opened the grating. It led into a burial vault.

The whole subterranean chapel stood at the end of the vault, which the Companions of Jehu used for their council-chamber. A table covered with black cloth stood in the centre, and twelve carved stalls, which had formerly been used by the monks when the burial service was being chanted, extended along the wall on either side of the chapel. On the table were placed an ink-stand, several pens, and some paper; two iron brackets projected from the wall, like hands ready to receive the torches which were placed in them.

The twelve monks seated themselves in the twelve stalls. They made the prisoner sit upon a stool at the end of the table; on the other side stood the traveller, the only one who did not wear the monk's cowl and who was not masked.

Morgan spoke.

"Monsieur Lucien de Fargas," he said, "was it of your own free will, and without constraint or force from any one, that you asked our brothers in the Midi to admit you to our association, and that you became an affiliated member thereof, after the usual initiation under the name of Hector?"

The young man bowed assent.

"It was of my own free and unrestrained will, without being forced by any one," he replied.

"You took the customary oaths, and were therefore aware of the terrible punishment awaiting those who prove false to them?"

"I knew," replied the prisoner.

"You knew that when any Companion, even under torture, reveals the names of his brethren, he incurs the death-penalty, and that this penalty is executed without reprieve or delay the moment that proof of his treachery is furnished?"

"I knew it."

"What could have induced you to break your oaths?"

"The impossibility of resisting the torture of loss of sleep. I resisted for five nights, on the sixth I asked for death, which was sleep. They would not give it to me. I sought a means to take my own life; but my jailers had taken their precautions so well that I could find none. On the seventh night I yielded. I promised to make disclosures on the morrow if they would let me sleep; but they insisted that I should speak at once. It was then in despair, insane from want of sleep, held up by the two men who prevented me from sleeping, I stammered the four names of M. de Valensolles, M. de Barjols, M. de Jayat, and M. de Ribier."

One of the monks drew from his pocket the record which they had taken from the registry, and held it before the prisoner's eyes.

"That is it," said the latter.

"And do you recognize your signature?" asked the monk.

"I recognize it," replied the young man.

"Have you any excuse to offer?" asked the monk.

"None," replied the young man. "I knew when I wrote my signature at the bottom of that page that I was signing my death-warrant. But I wanted to sleep."

"Have you any favor to ask before you die?"

"One."

"What is it?"

"I have a sister whom I love and who adores me. Being orphans, we were educated together; we grew up side by side, and have never been parted. I should like to write to my sister."

"You are free to do so. But at the end of your letter you must write the postscript that we shall dictate to you."

"Thanks," said the young man, rising and bowing.

"Will you untie my hands," he added, "so that I may write."

The wish was granted. Morgan, who had been the one to question him, pushed the paper, pen, and ink toward him. The young man wrote a page with a hand that did not tremble.

"I have finished, gentlemen," said he; "will you dictate the postscript?"

Morgan approached and laid one finger on the paper while the prisoner wrote.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the young man.

"I die because I have broken a sacred oath; consequently I acknowledge that I deserve death. If you wish to give my body Christian burial, it will be placed to-night in the market-place at Bourg. The dagger which will be found implanted in my breast will indicate that I do not die the victim of cowardly assassination, but of a just vengeance."

Morgan then drew from beneath his robe a dagger of which both handle and blade were forged from a single piece of metal. It was shaped in the form of a cross so that the condemned could kiss it in his last moments instead of a crucifix.

"If you wish, sir," said Morgan, "we will accord you the favor of striking your own death-blow. Here is the dagger. Is your hand sure enough?"

The young man pondered an instant. Then he said: "No, I fear that I should fail."

"Very well," said Morgan, "affix the address to your letter."

The young man folded the letter and wrote: "Mademoiselle Diane de Fargas, Nîmes."

"Now, sir," said Morgan, "you have just ten minutes in which to make your peace with God."

The old chapel altar, though mutilated, was still standing. The condemned went to it and knelt down. In the meantime the Companions tore a slip of paper into twelve parts, one of which bore the tracing of a dagger. The twelve pieces were

then placed in the hat of the messenger who had arrived just in time to witness this act of vengeance. Then, before the condemned man had finished his prayers, each monk drew a slip in turn. The one to whom the function of executioner had fallen said never a word; he merely took the dagger from the table and tested the point with his finger. The ten minutes having passed, the young man rose.

"I am ready," he said.

Then without hesitation or delay, firm and erect, the monk who had drawn the fatal slip walked straight to him and plunged the dagger into his heart. A cry of agony, then the thud of a body falling upon the pavement, and all was over. The condemned man was dead, the blade of the dagger had pierced his heart.

"Thus perish all the members of our holy order who are false to their oaths," said Morgan.

And all the monks responded in chorus: "Amen!"

CHAPTER VI

DIANE DE FARGAS

Just as the unfortunate Lucien de Fargas was drawing his last breath in the subterranean chapel of the Chartreuse of Seillon, a post-chaise stopped before the inn of the Dragon at Nantua. This inn of the Dragon had a certain reputation in Nantua and its suburbs, a reputation which it owed to the well-known opinions of its proprietor, René Servet.

Without knowing why, Master René Servet was a royalist. Thanks to the distance which stretched between Nantua and all the great centres of civilization, thanks also to the mild temperament of its inhabitants, Master René Servet had passed through the Revolution without being in the least molested for his opinions, well-known though they were.

It must be confessed, though, that the worthy man had done all in his power to invite persecution. Not only had he retained the name of the Dauphin for his inn, but on the tail of the fantastic fish on his sign-board, a tail which protruded insolently from the water, he had drawn the profile of the poor little prince, who had remained shut up for four years and who had died, shortly after the Thermidorean reaction, in the prison of the Temple.

Therefore all those who for sixty miles round the inn of the Dragon—and their number was great—shared the opinions of René Servet, did not fail to patronize his inn, and would not have consented to go elsewhere.

It was not astonishing, therefore, that a post-chaise having to stop at Nantua should leave its passengers rather at the aristocratic inn of the Dragon than at its democratic rival, the Boule d'Or.

At the sound of the chaise, although it was barely five in the morning, René Servet leaped out of bed, and putting on his drawers, a pair of white stockings, list slippers, and a great bath-robe over his shoulders, and holding his cotton cap in his hand, reached the doorstep just as a beautiful young woman of twenty or thereabout descended from the chaise.

She was dressed in black, and in spite of her youth and great beauty she was travelling alone.

She replied with a nod to René Servet's obsequious salutation, and, without paying any attention to his offers of service, asked him if he had a good room in his house with a dressing-room. Master René mentioned No. 7 on the first floor as the best he had.

The young lady hastened impatiently to the wooden placard where the keys were hanging from a frame and took down her key herself.

"Sir," said she, "will you be good enough to show me to my room? I want to ask you some questions. You can send the chambermaid to me when you go down."

René Servet bowed almost to the floor and hastened to obey. He went first and the young lady followed. When they reached the room she closed the door behind them, and, as she seated herself, she addressed the landlord, who remained standing.

"Master Servet," she said with decision, "I know you both by name and reputation. Throughout the bloody years that have just elapsed you have remained a partisan, if not a defender of the good cause. Therefore I come directly to you."

"You do me honor, madame," replied the innkeeper, bowing.

She resumed: "I shall therefore abandon all circumlocution or evasion, to which I might resort with a man whose opinions were less well-known to me, or who was suspected by me. I am a royalist. That gives you a right to my confidence. I know no one here, not even the president of the tribunal, for whom I have a letter from his brother-in-law at Avignon; it is therefore perfectly natural that I should address myself to you."

"I am waiting, madame," said René Servet, "for you to do me the honor to tell me what it is that I can do for you."

"Have you heard, sir, that a young man named Lucien de Fargas was brought to the prison at Nantua a few days ago?"

"Alas! yes, madame; it seems that he is to be tried here, or rather at Bourg. He is a member, so I am told, of the secret society called the Companions of Jehu."

"Do you know the purpose of that society, sir?" asked the young woman.

"I believe that they are to seize the government money and to forward it to our friends in the Vendée and Brittany."

"Exactly, sir; and the government treats these men like ordinary thieves!"

"I believe, madame," said René Servet, in a voice full of confidence, "that our judges are sufficiently intelligent to differentiate between them and ordinary malefactors."

"But to come to the point. It was thought that my brother ran some risk in the prison at Avignon, and it was to protect him that he was removed to the other end of France. I wish to see him. To whom ought I to apply to obtain this favor?"

"Why, madame, to the very president to whom you have that letter."

"What sort of a man is he?"

"A prudent man, but well-meaning, I hope. I will have you taken to his house whenever you wish."

Mademoiselle de Fargas drew out her watch. It was scarcely half-past five in the morning.

"But I cannot present myself at such an hour," she said. "Shall I go to bed? I am not sleepy." Then, after thinking for a moment, she asked: "On what side of the town is the prison?"

"If madame would like to take a turn that way," replied Master Servet, "I would beg the honor of accompanying her."

"Very well, sir. Send me a glass of milk, coffee, tea, whatever you please, and finish your toilet. While I am waiting for leave to enter, I should like to see the walls behind which my brother is confined."

The innkeeper made no remark; the desire was a natural one. He went down and sent her in a cup of coffee and some milk. Ten minutes later she came down and found him dressed in his Sunday clothes, ready to guide her through the streets of the little town, which was founded by the Benedictine Saint-Amand, and in whose church Charles the Bold sleeps more tranquilly than ever he did in life.

The town of Nantua is not large. A five minutes' walk brought them to the prison, where they found a crowd full of excitement.

Everything arouses foreboding in the minds of those whose friends are in danger. Mademoiselle de Fargas had more than a friend—an adored brother, who was lying in prison, charged with a capital offence. It seemed to her that her brother must be involved in the excitement which had caused the crowd to assemble. Growing pale, she seized the guide's arm, crying: "Oh! my God! what has happened?"

"We shall soon see, mademoiselle," replied René Servet, much less easily moved than his companion.

No one knew positively what had happened. When they had come to relieve the sentinel at two o'clock they had found him gagged and bound hand and foot in his box. All that he could tell was that he had been surprised by four men, and that he had offered a desperate resistance, which had ended in their leaving him in the state in which his comrades had found him. He could give no information concerning what had passed after he had been bound and gagged. He believed, however, that the prisoner had been the object of the attack. The mayor, the commissioner of police, and the fireman's sergeant had then been notified of what had occurred. These three dignitaries had then held council, had summoned the sentinel before them, and there he had repeated the same story.

After a half hour of deliberation and surmises, each one more ridiculous than its predecessor, they resolved to end where they ought to have begun, by going to the prison. But, in spite of prolonged knocking, no one came to admit them. But the strokes of the knocker aroused the people in the adjacent houses. They came to the windows, and a series of questions and answers passed, which resulted in a locksmith being sent for.

In the meantime the dawn had come, several dogs began to bark, and the occasional passers-by had grouped themselves round the mayor and the police commissioner; and when the sergeant returned with a locksmith, about four o'clock in the morning, he found quite a crowd gathered in front of the prison doors. The locksmith remarked that if the doors were bolted on the inside all the picklocks in the world would be of no avail. But the mayor, a man of great good sense, ordered him to try first, and if he failed they could devise some other means later. Now, as the Companions of Jehu had been unable to close the door on the outside and to bolt it on the inside at one and the same time, they had simply pulled it to after them; and to the great satisfaction of everybody the door had opened at once.

Then everybody tried to rush into the prison; but the mayor placed the sergeant on guard before the door, with orders to keep them all out. They had to obey the law. The crowd increased, but the mayor's order was respected.

There are not many cells in the prison of Nantua; they consist of three subterranean chambers, in one of which they could

hear groans. These groans attracted the attention of the mayor, who interrogated those who were making them through the door, and soon found that they were none other than the doorkeeper and the jailer themselves.

They had proceeded thus far with the municipal investigation, when Diane de Fargas and the landlord of the inn of the Dragon arrived in the square before the prison.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT WAS TALKED ABOUT FOR MORE THAN THREE MONTHS IN THE LITTLE TOWN OF NANTUA

To Master René's first question, "For heaven's sake! what is going on in the prison, friend Bodoux?" the person thus addressed replied:

"The most extraordinary things that were ever known, Monsieur Servet! When they came to relieve the sentinel this morning, they found him gagged and tied up like a sausage; and just now it seems that they have found Père Rossignol and his turnkey shut up in a cell. What times we live in, good Lord! What times we live in!"

From the very grotesqueness of the reply, Diane saw that he was telling the truth. It was clear to any intelligent person that if the jailer and the turnkey were inside, the prisoner must be outside.

Diane dropped Master René's arm, darted through the crowd, made her way toward the prison, and finally reached the door.

Here she heard some one say: "The prisoner has escaped!"

At the same time, Père Rossignol and the turnkey appeared within the jail, having been released from the cell in the first place by the locksmith, who had opened the door, and in the second place by the mayor and the police commissioner, who had unbound them.

"You cannot pass," said the sergeant to Diane.

"That order may apply to every one else," said Diane, "but not to me. I am the sister of the escaped prisoner."

This reasoning was not very conclusive in point of law, but it carried with it the logic of the heart, which few men can resist.

"Oh! that is another thing," said the sergeant, lifting his sword. "Pass on, mademoiselle!"

And Diane passed in, to the great astonishment of the crowd, who saw the curtain rising upon a new phase of the drama, and muttered: "It is the prisoner's sister!"

Now everybody in Nantua knew who the prisoner was, and for what cause he was imprisoned.

Père Rossignol and the turnkey were at first in such a state of terror and prostration that neither the mayor nor the police commissioner could get anything out of them. Fortunately the latter bethought him of the idea of giving them each a glass of wine, which enabled the former to relate how six masked men had forced an entrance into the prison, had compelled him and the turnkey Rigobert to go down to the cell with them, and after making sure of the prisoner, who had arrived two days before, had locked them up in his place. Since then they did not know what had happened.

This was all that Diane cared to know for the moment. Convinced that her brother had been taken away by the Companions of Jehu, since Père Rossignol described his assailants as masked men, she hastened from the jail. But she was at once surrounded by an eager crowd, who, having heard that she was the prisoner's sister, wanted to hear the details of his escape.

In a few words Diane told them all she knew, and with great difficulty she rejoined Master René Servet. She was about to give him the order for post-horses to start at once when she heard a man shout that the registry was on fire—a piece of news destined to share the attention of the crowd with that of the prisoner's escape.

Indeed, they had learned almost all that was to be learned, when this unexpected news opened up a new field of conjecture. It was almost certain that there must be some connection between the prisoner's escape and the fire at the registry. The young girl believed this to be the case. The order to put horses to the chaise died upon her lips, for she felt that this fire would furnish her with further details concerning her brother's escape which might be useful to her.

Time had been speeding on during this investigation. It was now eight o'clock in the morning. This was the time to present herself at the magistrate's house to whom she had the letter. Moreover, the extraordinary events of which the little town of Nantua had been the scene would explain this early visit, especially from the prisoner's sister. Diane, therefore, begged her landlord to take her to Monsieur Pérignon; for such was the name of the president of the tribunal.

Monsieur Pérignon had been one of the first to be awakened by the news which had thrown all Nantua into a turmoil. But he had hurried to the spot in which he, as a judge, was particularly interested; that is to say, to the registry. He had just returned when Mademoiselle de Fargas was announced.

When he reached the office the fire had been extinguished; but it had already consumed a portion of the papers which had been deposited there for safe-keeping. He had questioned the porter, who told him that the clerk had come to the office about half-past eleven with two gentlemen, and that he, the porter, had not thought it necessary to investigate, inasmuch as the clerk frequently came there in the evening to procure papers which he engrossed at home.

Scarcely had the clerk taken his departure when he had noticed a bright light through the windows of the office. Not understanding what it could mean, he had risen and gone in. There he had found a great fire, lighted in such a way that it would spread along the wooden cases which lined the wall, and which contained boxes of documents. He had not lost his head, but had separated the burning papers from the ones which the fire had as yet left untouched, and had succeeded in extinguishing it by bringing water in dippers from a tub in the cellar.

The worthy porter had gone no further in his calculations than to ascribe it to an accident; but as the flames had done some mischief, and he, by his presence of mind, had prevented still greater damage, he had told everybody about it in the morning when he awoke. As it was to his interest to enlarge upon the occurrence, by seven in the morning the rumor was current throughout the town that, had it not been for his great courage, the fire, which had burned his clothes off of his back, would have destroyed not only the registry but also the entire court house.

Monsieur Pérignon, on seeing the state of the registry office, had thought very sensibly that the best way to obtain information was to see the clerk himself. Consequently, he went to his house and asked to see him. He was told that during the night the clerk had been attacked with brain fever, and raved continuously of masked men, stolen papers, and burning records.

When he saw Monsieur Pérignon, the clerk's terror reached its climax; but believing that it would be wiser to tell all than to invent a fable that would only serve to make him suspected of complicity with the incendiaries, he fell at Monsieur Pérignon's feet and confessed all. The coincidence between the events of the night left no doubt in the magistrate's mind that they were a part of the same plot, and were intended to achieve the double purpose of carrying off both the guilty man and the proof of his guilt.

The presence of the prisoner's sister in his house, and her story of what had passed, left no room for doubt, even had he been in doubt. These masked men had come to Nantua with the intention of abducting Lucien de Fargas and the report of the prosecution, which had begun against him. Now for what purpose had the prisoner been abducted?

In the sincerity of her heart Diane did not doubt that her brother's companions, moved by generosity, had united, and had risked their own heads to save his.

But Monsieur Pérignon, whose mind was cold and logical, was not of the same opinion. He knew the actual reason for the prisoner's removal to Nantua; and that, having informed against some of his accomplices, he had since become an object of vengeance to the Companions of Jehu. Thus his opinion inclined him to the belief that, far from aiding him to escape from prison in order to restore his liberty, they had taken him away only to punish him more cruelly than the law would have done. The important thing, therefore, was to ascertain whether they had taken the road to Geneva or had returned to the interior of the department.

If they had taken the road to Geneva, thereby placing themselves beyond the frontier, it would prove that they had intended to save Lucien de Fargas and their own lives as well. If they had, on the contrary, gone into the interior of the department, it would be because they felt themselves strong enough to defy justice twice over—not only as highwaymen but as murderers.

At this suggestion, which came to her for the first time, Diane turned, and seizing Monsieur Pérignon's hand, cried: "Monsieur, monsieur! do you think they would dare commit such a crime?"

"The Companions of Jehu would dare anything, mademoiselle," replied the judge; "particularly that which one would suppose a crime they would not dare attempt."

"But," said Diane, trembling with terror, "how can we learn whether they have gone to the frontier or returned to the interior of France?"

"Oh! as to that, nothing is easier," replied the judge. "This is market-day, and ever since midnight the roads have been

crowded with peasants who have been bringing their produce to market with their carts and donkeys. Ten men on horseback, accompanied by a prisoner, could never have passed unnoticed. We must find some people coming from Saint-Germain and Chérizy, and ask them if they saw such a party going in the direction of the Gex country; and then we must find others who come from Vollognas and Peyriat, and find out whether they have seen a party of horsemen going toward Bourg."

Diane was so urgent, she laid so much stress upon the letter which Monsieur Pérignon's brother-in-law had given her to him, and, moreover, her situation as the sister of the man whose life was at stake aroused so much sympathy, that the magistrate consented to accompany her to the market-place.

There they learned that some horsemen had been seen on their way to Bourg.

Diane thanked Monsieur Pérignon, went to the Dauphin, ordered horses to be made ready, and started immediately for Bourg. There she alighted on the Place de la Prefecture, at the Hôtel des Grottes de Ceyzeriat, which had been recommended to her by Master René Servet.



CHAPTER VIII

A NEW COMPANION IS RECEIVED INTO THE SOCIETY OF JEHU UNDER THE NAME OF ALCIBIADES

Day was breaking when Lucien de Fargas suffered the penalty to which he had condemned himself, when, on entering the Society of Jehu, he had sworn on his life never to betray his companions. It was impossible, on that day at least, to expose his body publicly as proposed. Its removal to the Place de la Prefecture at Bourg was therefore postponed until the following night.

On leaving the underground vault, Morgan turned to the messenger and said:

"Sir, you have seen what has just passed, you know with whom you are, and we have treated you like a brother. If it is your pleasure that we should prolong this session, and you desire to take leave of us, fatigued as we are, we will acquiesce and give you your liberty unconditionally. If, however, you do not intend to leave us until night, and if the affair on which you have come is of great importance, grant us a few hours' sleep. Take some rest yourself, for you do not seem to have slept any more than we have. At noon, if you will remain so long, the council will hear you; and if my memory does not play me false, after having parted at our last meeting as companions-in-arms, we will part this time as friends."

"Gentlemen," said the messenger, "I was with you in heart long before I set foot in your domains. The oath which I shall take can add nothing, I trust, to the confidence which you have already reposed in me. At noon, if you please, I will present my letters of introduction to you."

Morgan shook hands with the messenger. Then, retracing their steps, the pretended monks returned through the underground passage, which they closed, carefully concealing the ring as before. They crossed the garden, skirted the cloister, re-entered the Chartreuse, and disappeared silently through different doors.

The younger of the two monks who had received the traveller remained with him, and showed him to his room, after which he bowed and withdrew. The guest of the Companions of Jehu noted with pleasure that he did not lock the door behind him. He went to the window, which opened from within, had no bars, and was almost on a level with the garden. The Companions of Jehu had evidently trusted him and had taken no precautions against him. He drew the curtains of his bed, threw himself upon it all dressed as he was, and slept. At noon he was awakened by the opening of the door. The young monk entered.

"It is noon, brother," said he: "but if you are weary and wish to sleep longer the council will wait."

The messenger sprang from the bed, took a brush and comb from his valise, brushed his hair, combed his moustache, glanced over his attire, and signed to the monk that he was ready to follow him. He was led to the hall where he had supped. Four young men awaited him, all of whom were unmasked.

It was evident from their attire, the care which they had bestowed upon their toilet, and the refined courtesy of their greeting, that they belonged all four to the aristocracy, either by birth or fortune.

Had the messenger not detected this of himself, he had not been left long in doubt.

"Monsieur," said Morgan, "I have the honor of presenting to you the four chiefs of the society, Monsieur de Valensolle, Monsieur de Jayat, Monsieur de Ribier, and myself, the Comte de Sainte-Hermine. Monsieur de Valensolle, Monsieur de Jayat, Monsieur de Ribier, I have the honor of presenting to you Monsieur Coster de Saint-Victor, a messenger from General Georges Cadoudal."

The five young men bowed and exchanged the customary greetings.

"Gentlemen," said Coster de Saint-Victor, "it is by no means surprising that Monsieur Morgan should know my name, or that he should not hesitate to tell me your names, since we fought in the same ranks on the 13th Vendémiaire. That is why we were companions before we were friends. As Monsieur le Comte de Sainte-Hermine has said, I come from General Cadoudal, with whom I serve in Brittany. Here is the letter which accredits me to you."

At these words Coster drew from his pocket a letter bearing a seal stamped with the fleur-de-lis, and handed it to the Comte de Sainte-Hermine. The latter broke the seal and read aloud:

MY DEAR MORGAN—You will remember that at our meeting in the Rue des Postes, you were the first to offer, in case I should carry on the war alone, and without help either from home or abroad, to be my cashier. All our defenders have died with arms in their hands or have been shot. Stofflet and Charette have been shot, D'Autichamp has submitted to the Republic; I stand alone, unshaken in my faith, unassailable in my Morbihan.

An army of two or three thousand men will suffice to keep the field; but I must furnish arms, food, and ammunition for them, as they ask no pay. The English have sent us nothing since Quiberon.

If you will furnish the money, we will furnish the blood. God forbid that you should think that I mean by this that you would be sparing of yours when occasion offers. No, your devotion is so much greater than ours that ours grows pale before it. If we, who are fighting here, should be taken, we would only be shot, whereas you, in like circumstances, would die upon the scaffold. You write me that you have a considerable sum at my disposal. If I could be sure of receiving thirty-five or forty thousand francs every month that would suffice.

I send you our common friend, Coster de Saint-Victor; his name alone will tell you that you may have perfect confidence in him. I have given him the little catechism that will enable him to reach you. Give him the first forty thousand francs if you have them, and keep the rest for us; it will be safer in your hands than in mine. If you are persecuted beyond measure yonder, cross France and join me.

Far and near, I love and thank you.

GEORGES CADOU DAL,

General-in-chief of the Army of Brittany.

P.S.—They tell me, my dear Morgan, that you have a young brother of nineteen or twenty. If you do not think me unworthy to teach him his first lessons in warfare, send him to me; he shall be my aide-de-camp.

Morgan stopped reading and looked questioningly at his companions. Each one nodded affirmatively.

"Will you intrust me with the reply, gentlemen?" asked Morgan.

The question was received with a unanimous "Yes." Whereupon Morgan took up his pen, and wrote while Monsieur de Valensolle, Monsieur de Jayat, Monsieur de Ribier, and Coster de Saint-Victor were talking in an embrasure of the window. Five minutes later he called Coster de Saint-Victor and his three companions and read them the following letter:

MY DEAR GENERAL—We have received your kind and noble letter by your brave and excellent messenger. We have about a hundred and fifty thousand francs in hand, and are therefore prepared to do as you request. Our new associate, to whom I have on my own authority given the name of Alcibiades, will start this evening, taking with him the first forty thousand francs.

Every month you will be able to procure the forty thousand francs at the same bank. In case of our death or dispersion, the money will be divided and buried in as many different places as we have times forty thousand francs. Subjoined you will find a list of the names of those who will know what the sums are and where they will be deposited.

Brother Alcibiades came just in time to be present at an execution; he has seen how we punish a traitor.

I thank you, my dear general, for your very kind offer to my brother, but I intend to keep him out of danger until he may be called upon to take my place. My elder brother was shot, bequeathing to me the duty of avenging his death. I shall probably die upon the scaffold, and I shall die bequeathing a similar duty to my brother. He in his turn will enter the road that we have trodden; and he will contribute to the good cause as we have done, or will die as we shall. No less powerful a motive could induce me, while asking your friendship for him, to deprive him of your immediate protection.

Send us again, as soon as you can spare him, our beloved brother Alcibiades; we shall be doubly glad to send you the message by such a messenger.

MORGAN.

The letter was approved by all, folded, sealed, and then given to Coster de Saint-Victor.

At midnight the great portal of the Chartreuse opened to permit two horsemen to pass out. One, the bearer of the letter to Cadoudal, together with the desired sum, took the road to Mâcon. The other, carrying the corpse of Lucien de Fargas, was on his way to the Place de la Prefecture at Bourg.

In the breast of the corpse was the knife with which he had been killed; and attached to the handle by a thread was the letter which the condemned man had written just before his death.



CHAPTER IX

THE COMTE DE FARGAS

It is now necessary that our readers should learn who was the unfortunate young man whose body had been placed upon the Place de la Prefecture, and also who the young woman was who had alighted at the Hôtel des Grottes de Ceyzeriat in the same square.

They were the last remaining scions of an old family of Provence. Their father, formerly a colonel and Chevalier de Saint-Louis, was born in the same town as Barras, with whom he had been intimate in his youth; namely, Fos-Emphoux. An uncle who had died at Avignon, making him his heir, had left him a house in that city. Thither he went in 1787, with his children, Lucien and Diane. Lucien at that time was twelve and Diane eight. That was the time of early revolutionary ardor, hopeful or fearful, as one was either a patriot or a royalist.

To those who are acquainted with Avignon, there were then in that city, as there are now and always have been, two cities in one—the Roman city and the French city.

There was the papal city, with its magnificent papal palace, its hundred churches, each more splendid than the other, and its innumerable bells, always ready to sound the tocsin of incendiarism or the knell of murder.

The French city, with its Rhone, its silk manufactories, and its crossroads going from north to south, from east to west, from Lyons to Marseilles, from Nîmes to Turin—the French city, the accursed city, longing for a king, jealous of its liberties, shuddering beneath the yoke of vassalage, a vassalage with the clergy for its lord.

The clergy—not the clergy as it has been from all times in the Gallican church, and such as we see it to-day, pious, tolerantly austere in its duties, living in the world to console and edify it, without mingling in its passions and its joys; but the clergy such as cupidity and intrigue had made it, with its court abbés, rivalling the Roman abbé's, idle, elegant, licentious, kings of fashion, autocrats of the salon, frequenters of houses of ill-fame. Do you want a type of these abbés? Take the Abbé Maury, proud as a duke, insolent as a lackey, son of a shoemaker, more aristocratic than the son of a great lord.

We have said, Avignon, Roman city; let us add, Avignon, city of hatreds. The heart of the child, born elsewhere free from the taint of hate, came into the world in the midst of hereditary hatred, bequeathed from father to son, and from son to son in turn, a diabolical inheritance for his children. In such a city every one was forced to make definite choice, and act a part in accordance with the importance of his position.

The Comte de Fargas had been a royalist before coming to Avignon. When he settled there, in order to meet his equals he was forced to become a fanatic. From that time he was looked upon as one of the royalist leaders and one of the standard-bearers of religion.

The time of which we are speaking was, as we have said, the year '87, the dawn of our independence. And so, at the first cry of liberty which was uttered in France, the French city rose full of joy and hope. The moment had come for her to contest aloud the concession made by a young queen under age, of a city, a province, and half a million souls, in order to atone for her crimes. By what right had she sold these souls forever to a foreign master?

All France hastened to the Champ de Mars, to meet in the fraternal embrace of the Federation. All Paris had labored to prepare that immense piece of ground; where sixty-seven years after the time of this fraternal embrace it was to invite all Europe to the Universal Exposition—the triumph of peace and industry over war. Avignon alone was excluded from this great love-feast; Avignon alone had no part in this universal communion. Was not Avignon, then, a part of France?

Avignon named deputies who went to the papal legate and gave him twenty-four hours in which to leave the city. During the night the Roman party, with the Comte de Fargas at its head, by way of revenge, amused itself by hanging a manikin wearing the tri-colored cockade.

It is possible to direct the course of the Rhone, to canal the Durance, to dam up the fierce torrents which, on the melting of the winter's snow, precipitate themselves in liquid avalanches from the peaks of Mont Ventoux; but this terrible living flood, this human torrent which rushed through the steep incline of the streets of Avignon, when once loosed, once launched on its way, heaven itself put forth no hand to stay its course.

At sight of the manikin with the national colors dangling at the end of a cord, the French city rose upon its very

foundations with shrieks of rage. The Comte de Fargas, who knew his Avignone, retired, on the night of this clever expedition which he had led, to the house of one of his friends in the valley of the Vaucluse. Four of his retainers, who were rightly suspected of having taken part in this expedition, were torn from his home and strung up in the manikin's stead. In order to accomplish this they seized ropes forcibly from a worthy man named Lescuyer, who was afterward falsely accused by the royalists of having volunteered to furnish them. This occurred on the 11th of June, 1790.

The French city as a unit wrote to the National Assembly and gave itself to France, and with itself its Rhone, its commerce, the Midi, and the half of Provence. The National Assembly, was in one of its reactionary moods; it did not wish to quarrel with the pope, and it temporized with the king; the matter was therefore postponed.

From that moment the patriotic movement in Avignon became a revolt, and the pope was empowered to punish and repress. Pope Pius VI. ordered the annulment of all that had been done in the Comtat-Venaissin, and the reestablishment of the privileges of the nobles and the clergy, and also that of the Inquisition in all its rigor. The Comte de Fargas returned triumphantly to Avignon, and not only no longer concealed the fact that he had strung up the manikin with the tri-colored cockade, but even boasted of it. No one dared to say anything. The pontifical decrees were posted.

One man, one only, dared, in open day, in the sight of all, to go straight to the wall on which the decree was affixed and tear it down. His name was Lescuyer. He was the man who had already been accused of furnishing ropes to hang the royalists. It will be remembered that he had been wrongfully accused. He was not a young man, and he therefore had not been swayed by the passions of youth. No, he was almost an old man, and not even a native of the country. He was a Frenchman of Picardy, impulsive and reflective at the same time. He was a notary, who had long been established at Avignon. This act of his was a crime at which all Roman Avignon trembled—a crime so great that the Virgin wept over it.

You see, Avignon is already Italy; it must have its miracles at any cost, and if Heaven would not provide them, some one would be found to invent them. This particular miracle occurred in the church of the Cordeliers. The crowd flocked thither.

A report was started at the same time which brought the excitement to a climax. A large chest, tightly sealed, had been carried through the city. This chest had excited the curiosity of the people of Avignon. What did it contain? Two hours later it was no longer one chest, but eighteen, which had been seen going in the direction of the Rhone. As for their contents, a porter had revealed that they were the treasures of the Mont-de-Piété which the French party were carrying with them in their departure from Avignon. The treasures of the Mont-de-Piété—that is to say, the possessions of the poor! The more wretched a city the richer its pawnshops. Few cities could boast such wealth in their pawnshops as could Avignon. This was no longer a matter of political opinion, it was a theft, an infamous theft. Whites and Blues, or, in other words, royalists and patriots, rushed to the church of the Cordeliers, not to see the miracle, but to shout that the municipality should answer to them for this crime.

Monsieur de Fargas was naturally at the head of those who shouted the loudest.

CHAPTER X

THE TROUILLASSE TOWER

Now Lescuyer, the man of the ropes, the patriot who had torn down the decrees of the Holy Father, the quondam Picard notary, was secretary to the municipality. His name was thrown to the crowds as not only having participated in the crimes already mentioned, but as having signed the order to the keeper at the Mont-de-Piété to allow the property to be taken away.

Four men were sent out to seize Lescuyer and to bring him to the church. They found him in the street on his way to the municipality. The four men threw themselves upon him, and amid ferocious cries they dragged him to the church.

In the church, Lescuyer realized from the flaming eyes fixed upon him, the outstretched hands which menaced him, and the cries demanding his death, that he was in one of those circles of hell forgotten by Dante. His only idea was that this hatred was inspired because of the ropes which had been taken forcibly from his shop, and the destruction of the pontifical decrees.

He ascended the pulpit, thinking to convert it into a tribunal of justice, and in the voice of a man who is not only not ashamed of what he has done, but who would repeat it, he began: "Citizens, I believed the Revolution necessary, and I have acted accordingly."

The Whites knew that if Lescuyer, whose death they desired, should explain, Lescuyer was saved. That was not what they wanted. Obeying a sign from the Comte de Fargas, they threw themselves upon him, tore him from the pulpit, and thrust him into the midst of the howling mob, which dragged him toward the altar, uttering that terrible cry, which combines the hiss of the serpent and the roar of the tiger—that murderous "*Zou! zou! zou!*" peculiar to the populace of Avignon.

Lescuyer knew that sinister cry. He tried to take refuge at the foot of the altar. He fell there. A laborer, armed with a club, dealt him such a blow on the head that the weapon was broken in two.

Then they flung themselves upon the poor body, and with that awful mixture of ferocity and gayety peculiar to Southern people, the men sang as they danced upon his body, while the women, that he might the more fitly atone for the blasphemies which he had uttered against the pope, cut off his lips, or rather scalloped them with their scissors. Then from the midst of that terrible group came a cry, or rather a death-rattle. It said: "In the name of Heaven, in the name of the Virgin, in the name of humanity, kill me at once!"

This groan was heard and understood. With one accord the crowd drew back. They left the wretched, mangled, bleeding man to taste his death-agony. It lasted five hours, during which, amid bursts of laughter, jeers, insults and mockeries, the poor body lay quivering on the steps of the altar. That is how they kill at Avignon.

Stay, and you will see that there is still another way.

While Lescuyer was undergoing his mortal agony, it occurred to one of the French party to go to the Mont-de-Piété (a thing they might well have done at first), to see if the story of the theft were true. He found everything in order there; not the smallest article had been removed.

It was therefore not as an accomplice of theft, but as a patriot, that Lescuyer had been murdered.

There was at that time a man in Avignon who ruled the destinies of that party which in times of revolution is neither white nor blue, but blood-hued. All these terrible leaders of the South have acquired such fatal celebrity that it suffices to name them for every one, even the least educated, to recognize them. This was the famous Jourdan. Braggart and liar, he had made the common people believe that it was he who had cut off the head of the governor of the Bastille; and so they called him "Jourdan Coupe-Tête." This was not his real name; it was Mathieu Jouve. He was not a Provençal; he came from Puy-en-Velay. He had once been a muleteer on the steep heights which surrounded his native town; afterward he became a soldier, without seeing war (war might have perhaps humanized him), then an innkeeper at Paris. At Avignon he dealt in madder.

He assembled three hundred men, took possession of the gates of the city, left half his troops there, and with the rest marched upon the church of the Cordeliers, preceded by two pieces of artillery. He set the battery up in front of the church and fired at random. The assassins dispersed like a flock of frightened birds, some escaping through the

windows, others by way of the sacristy, leaving several dead upon the church steps. Jourdan and his men stepped over these corpses and entered the sacred precincts.

There was nothing there save the statue of the Virgin and the unfortunate Lescuyer. He was still breathing, and when they asked him who had assassinated him, he gave the name, not of those who had dealt the blows, but of the man who had given the order to strike.

It was the Comte de Fargas.

Jourdan and his men were careful not to despatch the dying man, for his agony was a most potent means of exciting the people. They took this remnant of pulsating life, which was three-fourths dead, and carried it along, bleeding, panting, with the death-rattle in its throat. They shouted: "Fargas! Fargas! We must have Fargas!"

Every one fled at the sight, shutting doors and windows. At the end of an hour Jourdan and his men were masters of the city. Lescuyer died, and no one knew when he drew his last breath; but it mattered little, for they no longer needed his agony.

Jourdan took advantage of the terror he had inspired; and in order to assure the victory to his party, he arrested, or had arrested, eighty persons, assassins or alleged assassins, of Lescuyer, and, in consequence, accomplices of Fargas. As for the latter, he was not arrested as yet; but they were sure that he would be, since all the gates of the city were carefully guarded and the Comte de Fargas was known to everybody.

Of the eighty persons arrested, more than thirty had not even set foot within the church; but when chance affords such an excellent opportunity of ridding one's self of enemies, it should be accepted. These eighty persons were thrust into the Trouillasse Tower.

This was the tower in which the Inquisition was wont to put its victims to the torture. The greasy soot from the funereal pyre which consumed human flesh can still be seen to this very day along the walls, and also all the implements of torture, which have been carefully preserved—the caldron, the oven, the wooden horses, the chains, the oubliettes, yes, even to the old bones—nothing is wanting.

It was in this tower, built by Clement IV., that they confined the eighty prisoners. When they were safely lodged there, their captors were much embarrassed.

Who should try them? There were no legally appointed courts save those of the pope. Should they kill these wretches as they had killed Lescuyer? As we have said, there was at least a third of them, possibly half, who not only had taken no part in the assassination, but who had not even set foot in the church. To make an end of them was the only safe way; the slaughter would pass under the head of reprisals.

But executioners were needed to kill these eighty people.

A sort of tribunal organized by Jourdan sat in one of the halls of the palace. They had a clerk named Raphael; a president, half Italian, half French, an orator in the popular dialect, named Barbe Savournin de la Roua; then there were three or four poor devils, a baker, a charcoal-burner (their names have been lost, because they were of low estate). These were the ones who exclaimed: "We must kill them all! If any escape they will bear witness against us."

Executioners were wanting; there were scarcely twenty men in the courtyard, all belonging to the lowest classes in Avignon—a wig-maker, a women's-shoemaker, a cobbler, a mason, a carpenter, all with weapons caught up at haphazard. One had a sword, another a bayonet, this one a bar of iron, that one a piece of wood that had been hardened in the fire. They were all shivering in a fine October rain. It would be difficult to make assassins of such creatures. Nonsense! is there anything difficult for the devil? There is a moment in such events when Providence seems to abandon its followers; then it is Satan's turn.

Satan in person entered this cold and muddy court disguised in the appearance, form and face of an apothecary of the neighborhood, named Mende. He set up a table, lighted by two lanterns. Upon it he placed glasses, pitchers, jugs, and bottles. What was the infernal beverage that was contained in these mysterious receptacles? No one knows; but its effect is well-known. All those who drank of that diabolical liquor were seized with a sudden fever that raged through their veins—the lust of blood and murder. After that they needed only to be shown the door, and they hurled themselves into the cells.

The massacre lasted all night. All night cries, shrieks and moans echoed through the darkness. They killed them all, men and women. It took a long time, for, as we have said, the executioners were drunk and poorly armed. However, the task

was finished after a time. As soon as the victims were killed they were thrown, dead and wounded together, into the pit of the Trouillasse Tower, a distance of some sixty feet down. The men were thrown first, and then the women. At nine o'clock in the morning, after the massacre had lasted twelve hours, a voice cried out from the depths of the sepulchre: "For God's sake, come and finish me!"

One man, the armorer Bouffier, leaned over the hole; the others did not dare.

"Who called?" they asked him.

"It was Lami," he replied, drawing back.

"Well," asked the assassins, "what do you see down there?"

"A queer marmalade," he replied; "all pell-mell, men and women, priests and pretty girls. It is enough to make one die of laughing."

At that moment cries of grief and shouts of triumph made themselves heard, and the name of Fargas was repeated by a thousand voices. It was indeed the count whom they were bringing to Jourdan Coupe-Tête. He had just been found hidden in a cask in the Hôtel Palais-Royal. He was half naked, and covered with such immense quantities of blood that they did not know but what he would fall dead when they loosened their grip.



CHAPTER XI

BROTHER AND SISTER

The executioners, who might have been thought weary, were only drunk. Even as the sight of wine seemingly gives strength to a drunkard, so does the sight of blood revive the forces of the assassin. All these cut-throats, who were lying in the courtyard half asleep, opened their eyes and jumped to their feet at the name of Fargas.

He, far from being dead, had received only some slight wounds. But when he found himself in the presence of these fiends, believing his death to be inevitable, and having but the one idea of making it as swift and painless as possible, he threw himself upon the man who was nearest to him, and bit him so savagely in the cheek that the man thought of nothing but putting an end to the horrible pain. He instinctively thrust out his hand, and his knife, coming in contact with the count's breast, was buried into it up to the hilt. The count fell dead without a cry.

Then they did to his corpse what they had been cheated of doing with the living man. Each man flung himself upon it, struggling to secure a bit of his flesh. When men reach such a point there is little difference between them and the South Sea Islanders who live on human flesh.

They lighted a pile of wood and threw Fargas's body upon it; and as if no new god or goddess could be glorified without human sacrifice, the Liberty of the pontifical city had on the same day its patriot martyr in the person of Lescuyer and its royalist martyr in Fargas.

While these things were taking place at Avignon, the two children, ignorant of these dire events, were living in a little house which was called the Three Cypresses, because of three trees which stood in front of it. Their father had gone in the morning to Avignon, as he often did, and he had been stopped at one of the gates as he was on his way back to them.

The first night passed without occasioning them much uneasiness. As he had a house in the city as well as one in the country, the Comte de Fargas often stopped a day or two at Avignon, for business, it might be, or for pleasure.

Lucien preferred to live in the country, of which he was very fond. He and his sister were alone there except for the cook and one other servant. He was passionately attached to Diane, who was three years younger than himself. She returned his affection with the ardor of Southern natures, which can neither love nor hate by halves.

The young people were brought up together and were never parted. Although of different sexes they had had the same masters and had pursued the same studies; with the result that at ten Diane showed slight resemblances to a boy, and Lucien at thirteen gave evidence of girlish traits.

As their country-seat was not more than two miles distant from Avignon, the tradesfolk brought them word on the second day of the murders which had been committed. The two children were much alarmed on their father's account. Lucien gave orders to saddle his horse; but Diane would not let him go alone. She had a horse like her brother's and was quite as good an equestrian as he; she therefore saddled her horse herself, and they set off at a gallop for the city.

They had only just arrived and had begun to make inquiries, when they learned that their father had been arrested and hurried to the papal palace, where a tribunal was sitting in justice upon the royalists. As soon as they heard this, Diane set off at a sharp gallop and hastened up the slope that led to the old fortress. Lucien followed her at a short distance. They reached the courtyard almost at the same time, and perceived the smoking remnants of the fagots which had consumed their father's body. Several of the assassins recognized them and cried out: "Death to the wolf's cubs!"

At the same time they endeavored to seize their bridles in order to force the orphans to dismount. One of the men who had carried his hand to the bridle of Diane's horse received a stinging blow across the face from her riding-whip. This was only an act of legitimate defence, but it exasperated the assassins, who redoubled their cries and threats. But just then Jourdan Coupe-Tête came forward. Whether from satiety or from a tardy sense of justice a ray of humanity shone in upon his heart.

"Yesterday," he said, "in the heat of the struggle and the desire for vengeance, we may possibly have mistaken the innocent for the guilty; but to-day we cannot permit such an error. The Comte de Fargas was guilty of insulting France and of murdering human beings. He hung the national colors on an infamous gibbet and he incited the murder of Lescuyer. The Comte de Fargas deserved death and you meted it out to him. It is well. France and humanity are avenged! But his children have never participated in an act of barbarity or injustice, and they are innocent. Let them go in peace therefore, that they may not be able to say of the patriots, as we can say of the royalists, that we are assassins."

Diane did not wish to flee, and to her mind to go without wreaking vengeance was equivalent to fleeing; but she and her brother could do nothing by themselves. Lucien took the bridle of her horse and led her away.

When the two orphans reached home they burst into tears and threw themselves into each other's arms; they had no one left in the world to love except themselves.

Their mutual love was a holy and fraternal thing to see. Thus they grew up together until Lucien was twenty-one and Diane eighteen.

The Thermidorean reaction occurred at this time. Their name was a pledge of their political creed. They went to no one; but others sought them out. Lucien listened coldly to the propositions which were made to him, and demanded time for reflection. Diane seized upon them eagerly, and signified that she would undertake to convince her brother. Indeed, no sooner were they alone than she confronted him with the great question "Noblesse oblige."

Lucien had been educated as a royalist and a Christian. He had to avenge his father, and his sister exerted great influence over him. He therefore gave his word. From that moment, that is to say toward the end of 1796, he became a member of the Company of Jehu, called *Du Midi*.

We know the rest.

It would be difficult to describe the violence of Diane's emotions from the time of her brother's arrest until he was transferred to the department of the Ain. She then took all the money of which she could dispose and started in a post-chaise for Nantua.

We know that she arrived too late, and that at Nantua she learned of her brother's abduction and the burning of the registry, and that, thanks to the judge's acumen, she was made cognizant of the motive of the two exploits. She reached the Hôtel des Grottes de Ceyzeriat that same day about noon, and upon her arrival she hastened at once to present herself at the prefecture, where she related what had occurred at Nantua, which was still unknown at Bourg.

This was by no means the first time that word of the prowess of the Companions of Jehu had reached the prefect's ear.

Bourg was a royalist town. Most of its inhabitants sympathized with the young outlaws. Frequently, when giving orders that one of their number be watched or arrested, the prefect had been conscious of an invisible net, drawing around him, and although he could not see clearly, he felt the source of some hidden resistance which paralyzed his authority. But this time the accusation was definite and precise; armed men had taken their accomplice by force from prison; they had, again by force, compelled the registry clerk to give them the paper which compromised the names of four of their accomplices in the Midi. These men, finally, had been seen on their way to Bourg, after the perpetration of their double crime.

He summoned the commander of the gendarmerie, the president of the court, and the police commissioner to appear before himself and Diane; he made Diane repeat her exhaustive accusation against these formidable unknown persons; he declared that within three days he proposed to have definite information; and he asked Diane to spend those three days at Bourg. Diane divined how great an interest the prefect would necessarily take in the apprehension of those whom she was seeking. She returned at nightfall to the hotel, worn out with fatigue, and dying of hunger, for she had scarcely eaten anything since she had left Avignon.

She supped and retired, sleeping that deep sleep of youth which conquers grief.

The next morning a great uproar beneath her windows aroused her. She rose and peered through her blinds, but she could discern naught save an immense crowd surging in every direction; but something in the nature of a presentiment told her that a fresh trial awaited her.

She put on her dressing-gown, and without waiting to smooth her hair, which had become disordered during her slumber, she opened the casement and looked over the balcony.

But no sooner had she cast a glance at the street, than she rushed from her room with a loud cry, darted down the stairs, and threw herself, mad with grief, dishevelled and ghastly pale, upon the body which was lying in the centre of the group, crying: "My brother! my brother!"

CHAPTER XII

IN WHICH THE READER WILL MEET SOME OLD ACQUAINTANCES

We must now ask our readers to follow us to Milan, where, as we have said, Bonaparte, who no longer called himself *Buonaparte*, had his headquarters.

The same day, and at the very hour when Diane de Fargas recovered her brother in so pitiful and tragic a manner, three men came out of the barracks of the Army of Italy, while three others issued from the adjacent barracks, which were occupied by the Army of the Rhine. General Bonaparte had demanded a reinforcement after his first victories, and two thousand men had been detached from Moreau's army, and sent, under command of Bernadotte, to the Army of Italy.

The six men made their way toward the eastern gate, walking in two separate groups, each at a little distance from the other. This was the gate behind which occurred the numerous duels which resulted from personal rivalry of valor, and the differences of opinion between the soldiers from the North and those who had always fought in the South.

An army is always modelled upon the characteristics of its general. His peculiarities extend to his officers, and from them they spread to the soldiers. The division of the Rhine, which had come South under Bernadotte's command, was formed upon Moreau's model.

The royalist faction looked longingly toward Moreau and Pichegru. The latter had been all ready to yield, but he had wearied of the indecision of the Prince de Condé. Nor had he been willing to introduce the enemy into France without having determined beforehand the conditions which should circumscribe the rights of the prince whom he was admitting, as well as those of the people who were to receive him. Nothing had actually taken place between himself and the Prince de Condé except a correspondence which had borne no fruit. He had, moreover, resolved to bring about this revolution, not through his military influence, but through that of the high position which his fellow-citizens had bestowed upon him in making him president of the Five Hundred.

Moreau's Republicanism could not be shaken. Careless, moderate, unemotional, with no taste for politics beyond his capacity, he held himself in reserve, sufficiently nattered by the praise which his friends and the royalists had bestowed upon his masterly retreat from the Danube, which they likened to that of Xenophon.

His army, therefore, was like him, cold, phlegmatic and submissive to his discipline. The Army of Italy, on the contrary, was composed of our Southern revolutionists—brave hearts who were as impulsive in their opinions as in their courage.

Having been the centre for more than a year and a half of the glory which the French arms were reaping before the eyes of all Europe, the attention of that continent was fixed upon them. It could pride itself, not upon masterly retreats, but upon victories. Instead of being forgotten by the government, as were the armies of the Rhine and the Sambre-et-Meuse, generals, officers and soldiers were overwhelmed with praise and honors, gorged with money and sated with pleasure. Serving first under General Bonaparte—that is to say, under the star which had been shedding a light so brilliant that it had dazzled all Europe—then under Generals Masséna, Joubert, and Augereau, who set the example of the most ardent republicanism, they were, by order of Bonaparte, kept informed of the events which were transpiring at Paris (through the medium of the journals which the general circulated among them), that is to say, of a reaction which threatened to equal that of Vendémiaire. To these men—who did not form their opinions by discussion, but who received them ready-made—the Directory, the heir and successor of the Convention, was still the revolutionary government to whom their services were devoted, as in 1792. They asked but one thing, now that they had conquered the Austrians and thought that they had nothing more to do in Italy, and that was to cross the Alps again, in order to put the aristocrats in Paris to the sword.

These two groups on their way to the Eastern gate presented a fair sample of the two armies.

One—which, as its uniform denoted, belonged to that tireless infantry which, starting from the foot of the Bastille, had made the tour of the world—consisted of Sergeant-major Faraud, who had married the Goddess of Reason, and his two inseparable companions, Groseiller and Vincent, who had both attained to the rank of sergeant.

The other group belonged to the cavalry, and was composed of the chasseur Falou—who, it will be remembered, had been appointed quartermaster-general by Pichegru—and two of his comrades, one a quartermaster, the other a brigadier. Falou, who belonged to the Army of the Rhine, had not advanced a step since his promotion by Pichegru.

Faraud, it is true, had remained in the same rank which he had received at the lines of Weissembourg—the rank which stops so many poor fellows whose education will not permit of their taking the examination necessary for a commission. But he had been twice mentioned in the order of the day of the Army of Italy, and Bonaparte had ordered him brought before him, and had said to him: "Faraud, you are a fine fellow."

The result was that Faraud was as well satisfied with these two orders of the day, and Bonaparte's words, as though he had been promoted to the rank of a sub-lieutenancy.

Now, Quartermaster-general Falou and Sergeant-major Faraud had had a few words on the previous evening, which had seemed sufficient to them to warrant this promenade to the Eastern gate—in other words, to use the terms employed under such circumstances, the two friends were about to refresh themselves with a sword-thrust or two.

And, in fact, as soon as they were outside the gate, the seconds of both parties began to look for a suitable spot where each would have the advantage of sun and ground. When this was found, the seconds notified the principals, who at once followed them, apparently satisfied by their choice, and promptly prepared to utilize these advantages by throwing aside their foraging caps, coats and waistcoats. Then each turned back the right sleeve as far as the elbow.

Faraud had a flaming heart and the words, "The Goddess of Reason," tattooed upon his arm.

Falou, less concentrated in his affections, had this Epicurean device, "Long live wine! Long live love!"

The fight was to be conducted with the infantry swords known as *briquets*. Each received his weapon from one of his seconds and fell upon his adversary.

"What the devil can one do with such a kitchen knife as this," growled chasseur Falou, who was accustomed to the long cavalry sabre and who handled the short sword as if it had been a pen. "This is only fit to cut cabbages and to scrape carrots."

"It will serve also," said Faraud with that peculiar movement of the neck which we have already noticed in him, "it will serve also, for those who are not afraid to come to close quarters, to shave an enemy's mustache."

And making a feint to thrust at his adversary's thigh, he thrust at the other's head and was successfully parried.

"Oh!" said Falou, "very good, sergeant, the mustaches are according to orders. It is forbidden to cut them off in our regiment, and, above all, to let any one else cut them off. Those who permit such a thing are usually punished. Punished for it," he repeated, watching his chance, "punished for it by a touch on the wrist." And with such rapidity that his opponent had no time to parry, Falou made the thrust which is known by the portion of the body at which it is aimed. The blood spurted from Faraud's arm on the instant, but, furious at being wounded, he cried: "It is nothing. It is nothing. Let us go on!"

And he stood on guard.

But the seconds sprang between the combatants, declaring that honor was satisfied.

Thereupon Faraud threw down his weapon and held out his arm. One of the seconds drew a handkerchief from his pocket and, with a dexterity that proved he was no novice at the art, bound up the wound. He was in the midst of this operation, when a group of eight or ten horsemen appeared from behind a clump of trees not twenty yards distant.

"The deuce! The commander-in-chief!" said Falou.

The soldiers looked for some way of escaping the notice of their chief, but he had already seen them, and was urging his horse toward them with whip and spur. They stood motionless, saluting with one hand, and with the other at their side. The blood was streaming from Faraud's arm.

CHAPTER XIII

CITIZENS AND MESSIEURS

Bonaparte drew rein four paces from them, making a motion to his staff to stop where they were. Immovable upon his horse, which was less impassive than he, stooping slightly from the heat and the malady from which he was suffering, his piercing eyes half hidden by the drooping upper lid, and darting flashes through the lashes, he resembled a bronze statue.

"So you are fighting a duel here," he said, in his incisive voice, "when you know that I do not approve of duels. The blood of Frenchmen belongs to France and should be shed for France alone." Then, looking from one to the other, and finally letting his glance rest upon Faraud, "How does it happen that a fine fellow like you, Faraud—"

Bonaparte at this time made it a matter of principle to retain in his memory the faces of the men who distinguished themselves, so that he could upon necessity call them by name.

Faraud started with delight when he heard the general mention his name, and raised himself on tiptoe. Bonaparte saw the movement, and, smiling inwardly, he continued: "How does it happen that a fine fellow like you, who has been twice mentioned in the order of the day, once at Lodi and again at Rivoli, should disobey my orders thus? As for your opponent, whom I do not know—"

The commander-in-chief purposely emphasized these words. Falou frowned, for the words pierced him like a needle in the side.

"I beg your pardon, general," he said; "the reason you do not know me is because you are too young; because you were not with the Army of the Rhine at the battle of Dawendorff, and at Froeschwiller, as well as the recapture of the lines of Weissembourg. If you had been there—"

"I was at Toulon," said Bonaparte, dryly: "and if you drove the Prussians out of France at Weissembourg, I did as much for the English at Toulon, which was fully as important."

"That is true," said Falou; "and we even put your name on the order of the day. I was wrong to say that you were too young; I acknowledge it and beg your pardon. But I was right in saying that you were not there, since you yourself admit that you were at Toulon."

"Go on," said Bonaparte; "have you anything more to say?"

"Yes, general," replied Falou.

"Then say it," replied Bonaparte; "but as we are Republicans, be good enough to call me citizen-general when you address me."

"Bravo!" cried Faraud; and his seconds, Groseiller and Vincent, nodded approvingly.

Falou's seconds did not betray either their approval or disapproval.

"Well, citizen-general!" said Falou, with that familiarity of speech which the principle of equality had introduced into the army, "if you had been at Dawendorff, faith! you would have seen me save General Abatucci's life during a charge of cavalry, and he is as good as any man."

"Ah!" said Bonaparte, "thanks! I believe that Abatucci is a sort of cousin of mine."

Falou picked up his cavalry sabre and showed it to Bonaparte. He was much astonished to find a general's sword in the possession of a quartermaster-general.

"It was on that occasion that General Pichegru, who is as good as any man"—and he emphasized this characterization—"seeing the state to which my poor sabre had been reduced, made me a present of his, which is not altogether according to orders, as you see."

"Go on," said Bonaparte; "for I see that you have something more to tell me."

"I have this to tell you also, general. If you had been at Froeschwiller, on the day that General Hoche offered six hundred francs on the Prussian cannon, you would have seen me capture one of those cannon, and also have seen me made quartermaster for it."

"And did you receive those six hundred francs?"

Falou shook his head.

"We gave them up to the widows and children of the poor fellows who died on the day of Dawendorff, and I took only my pay, which was in one of the Prince de Condé's chests."

"Brave, disinterested fellow! Go on," said the general; "I like to see such men as you, who have no journalists to sound their praises or to decry them, pronouncing their own panegyrics."

"And then," continued Falou, "had you been at the storming of the lines of Weissembourg, you would have known that when three Prussians attacked me I killed two. True, I did not parry in time to escape a blow from the third, of which this is the scar—you see where I mean—to which I replied with a thrust with the point that sent my man to rejoin his two comrades. I was made quartermaster-general for that."

"And is this all true?" asked Bonaparte.

"Oh! as for that," said Faraud, drawing near, and bringing his bandaged hand to the salute, "if the quartermaster needs a witness, I can testify that he has told nothing but the truth, and that he has said too little rather than too much. It is well known in the Army of the Rhine."

"Well," said Bonaparte, looking benevolently at the two men who had just been exchanging blows, and of whom one was now sounding the other's praises, "I am delighted to make your acquaintance, citizen Falou. I trust that you will do as well in the Army of Italy as you have in the Army of the Rhine. But how does it happen that two such fine fellows as you should be enemies?"

"We, citizen-general?" exclaimed Falou. "We are not enemies."

"Why the deuce were you fighting then, if you are not enemies?"

"Oh!" said Faraud, with his customary twist of the neck, "we were just fighting for the sake of fighting."

"But suppose that I tell you I wish to know why you fought?"

Faraud looked at Falou as if to ask his permission.

"Since the citizen-general wants to know, I see no reason why we should conceal it," said the latter.

"Well, we fought—we fought—because he called me monsieur."

"And what do you want to be called?"

"Citizen, by Heaven!" replied Faraud. "We paid dearly enough for that title to want to keep it. I am not an aristocrat like those messieurs of the Army of the Rhine."

"You hear, citizen-general," said Falou, tapping impatiently with his foot and laying his hand on the hilt of his sabre; "he calls us aristocrats."

"He was wrong, and so were you when you called him monsieur," replied the commander-in-chief. "We are all citizens of the same country, children of the same family, sons of the same mother. We are fighting for the Republic; and the moment when kings recognize it is not the time for good men like you to deny it. To what division do you belong?" he continued, addressing Quartermaster Falou.

"To the Bernadotte division," replied Falou.

"Bernadotte," repeated Bonaparte—"Bernadotte, a volunteer, who was only a sergeant-major in '89; a gallant soldier, who was promoted on the battlefield by Kléber to the rank of brigadier-general, who was made a general of division after the victories of Fleurus and Juliers, and who took Maestricht and Altdorf! Bernadotte encouraging aristocrats in his army! I thought he was a Jacobin. And you, Faraud, to what corps do you belong?"

"To that of citizen-general Augereau. No one can accuse him of being an aristocrat. He is like you, citizen-general. And so, when we heard these men of the Sambre-et-Meuse calling us monsieur, we said to each other, 'A cut of the sabre for each monsieur! Is it agreed?' 'Agreed!' And since then we have stood up here perhaps a dozen times, our division against that of Bernadotte. To-day it is my turn to pay the piper. To-morrow it will be a monsieur."

"To-morrow it will be no one," said Bonaparte, imperiously. "I will have no duelling in the army. I have said it, and I repeat it."

"But—" murmured Faraud.

"I will talk of this with Bernadotte. In the meantime you will please preserve intact the Republican traditions; and whether you belong to the Sambre-et-Meuse, or to the Army of Italy, you will address each other as citizen. You will each of you pass twenty-four hours in the guard-house as an example. And now shake hands and go away arm in arm like good citizens."

The two soldiers stepped up to each other and exchanged a frank and manly grasp of the hand. Then Faraud threw his vest over his left shoulder and passed his arm through that of Falou.

The seconds did the same, and all six entered the city by the Eastern gate, and went quietly toward the barracks.

General Bonaparte looked after them with a smile, murmuring: "Brave hearts! Cæsar crossed the Rubicon with men like that; but it is not yet time to do as Cæsar did." Then he cried: "Murat!"

A young man of twenty-four, with black hair and mustache, and a quick, intelligent eye, dashed forward on his horse, and sprang instantly to the general's side.

"Murat," he said, "you will start at once for Vicenza, where Augereau is at present. You will bring him to me at the Palace Serbelloni. You will tell him that the ground-floor is unoccupied, and that he can have it."

"The deuce!" murmured those who had seen but had not heard; "it looks as though General Bonaparte were out of humor."



CHAPTER XIV

THE CAUSE OF CITIZEN-GENERAL BONAPARTE'S ILL-HUMOR

Bonaparte returned to the Palace Serbelloni. He was indeed in a bad humor.

While he was hardly at the beginning of his career, had hardly reached the dawn of his vast renown, calumny was already persecuting him with her endeavors to rob him of the merit of his incredible victories, which were comparable only to those of Alexander, Hannibal, or Cæsar. Men said that Carnot laid out his military plans, and that his pretended military genius merely followed step by step the written directions of the Directory. They also said that he knew nothing of the matter of administration, and that Berthier, his chief of staff, attended to everything.

He saw the struggle which was taking place in Paris against the partisans of royalty, then represented by the Clichy Club, as they had been represented two years earlier by the Section Le Peletier.

Bonaparte's two brothers, in their private correspondence, urged him to take a stand between the royalists, that is to say the counter-revolution, and the Directory, which still stood for the Republic, greatly diverted no doubt from its original starting-point and its original aim, but the only standard nevertheless around which republicans could rally.

In the majority of the two councils ill-will against him was patent. Party leaders were incessantly wounding his self-esteem by their speeches and their writings. They belittled his glory, and decried the merits of the admirable army with which he had conquered five others.

He had attempted to enter civil affairs. He had been ambitious to become one of the five directors in the stead of the one who had resigned.

If he had succeeded in that attempt he was confident that he would in the end have been sole director. But they had objected to his age—twenty-eight—as an obstacle, since he would have to be at least thirty to become a director. He had therefore withdrawn, not daring to ask an exception in his favor, and thus violate that constitution for the maintenance of which he had fought on the 13th Vendémiaire.

The directors, moreover, were far from desiring him for a colleague. The members of this body did not disguise the jealousy with which Bonaparte's genius inspired them, nor did they hesitate to proclaim that they were offended at his haughty manner and assumption of independence.

It grieved him to think that they styled him a furious demagogue, and called him the "Man of the 13th Vendémiaire," whereas, on the 13th Vendémiaire, he had been only the "Man of the Revolution," in other words, of the public interests.

His instinctive inclination was, if not toward the Revolution, at least against the royalists. He was therefore pleased to note the republican spirit of the Revolution and to encourage it. His first success at Toulon had been against the royalists, his victory on the 13th Vendémiaire had also been against royalist forces. What were the five armies which he had defeated? Armies which supported the cause of the Bourbons; in other words, royalist armies.

But that which, at this period of all others, when he was wavering between the safe rôle of Monk and the dangerous rôle of Cæsar, made him fling high the banner of the Republic, was his innate presentiment of his future grandeur. Even more than that, it was the proud feeling which he shared with Cæsar that he would rather be the first man in a country town than the second in Rome.

Indeed, no matter how exalted a rank the king might confer upon him, even though it be that of Constable of France, that king would still be above him, casting a shadow upon his brow. Mounting with the aid of a king, he would never be more than an upstart; mounting by his own unaided efforts, he would be no upstart—he would stand upon his own feet.

Under the Republic, on the contrary, he was already head and shoulders above the other men, and he could but continue to grow taller and taller. Perhaps his glance, piercing though it was, had not yet extended to the vast horizon which the Empire revealed to him; but there was in a republic an audacity of action and a breadth of enterprise which suited the audacity of his genius and the breadth of his ambition.

As sometimes happens with men who are destined to greatness, and who perform impossible deeds—not because they are predestined to them, but because some one had prophesied that they would do them, and they thereafter regard themselves as favorites of Providence—the most insignificant facts, when presented in certain lights, often led to momentous resolves with Bonaparte. The duel which he had just witnessed, and the soldiers' quarrel respecting the

words monsieur and citizen, had brought before him the whole question that was then agitating France. Faraud, in naming his general, Augereau, as an inflexible exponent of democracy, had indicated to Bonaparte the agent he was seeking to second him in his secret plans.

More than once Bonaparte had reflected upon the danger of a Parisian revolt which would either overthrow the Directory, or oppress it as the Convention had been oppressed, and which would lead to a counter-revolution, or, in other words, the victory of the royalists, and to the accession of some prince of the house of Bourbon. In that case Bonaparte had fully determined to cross the Alps with twenty-five thousand men, and march upon Paris by way of Lyons. Carnot, with his sharp nose, had no doubt scented his design, for he sent him the following letter:

People ascribe to you a thousand projects, each one more absurd than the other. They cannot believe that a man who has achieved so much can be content to remain a simple citizen.

The Directory also wrote him:

We have noticed, citizen-general, with the utmost satisfaction, the proofs of attachment which you are constantly giving to the cause of liberty and the Constitution of the Year III. You can count upon the most complete reciprocity on our part. We accept with pleasure all the offers that you have made to come at the first appeal to the succor of the Republic. They are only another proof of your sincere love for your country. You may rest assured that we shall make use of them only to the interests of its tranquillity, its happiness, and its glory.

This letter was in the handwriting of La Reveillière-Lepaux, and was signed by Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillière. The other two, Carnot and Barthélemy, either knew nothing about it, or refused to sign it.

But as chance would have it, Bonaparte was better informed concerning the situation of the directors than were the directors themselves. A certain Comte Delaunay d'Entraigues—a royalist agent well-known in the Revolution—happened to be in Venice when the city was besieged by the French. He was considered the moving factor in all the machinations which were on foot against France, and particularly against the Army of Italy. He was a man of sure judgment. He realized the peril of the Republic of Venice and tried to escape; but the French troops occupied the mainland, and he and his papers were taken. When he was brought before Bonaparte as an emigré, the latter treated him with all the consideration which he habitually showed toward them. He had all his papers returned to him except three, and, upon his giving his parole, the general gave him the entire city of Milan for a prison.

One fine morning it was learned that the Comte Delaunay d'Entraigues, abusing the confidence which the general had reposed in him, had left Milan and escaped to Switzerland.

But one of the three papers left in Bonaparte's hands, was, under the circumstances, of the greatest importance. It was an exact recital of what had taken place between Fauche-Borel and Pichegru at their first interview at Dawendorff, which has been described in a previous volume, when Fauche-Borel presented himself to Pichegru under the name and garb of citizen Fenouillot, commercial dealer in the wines of Champagne.

The famous Comte de Montgaillard, of whom we have, I think, already said a few words, was intrusted with further communications from the Prince de Condé to Pichegru; and this paper, written by the Comte Delaunay d'Entraigues at the dictation of the Comte de Montgaillard himself, contained the successive offers which the Prince de Condé had made to the general in command of the Army of the Rhine.

The Prince de Condé, who was vested with all the authority of Louis XVIII., with the exception of the right of bestowing the blue ribbon, had offered Pichegru, if he would give up the town of Huningue and return to France at the head of the Austrians and emigrés, to make him Marshal of France and governor of Alsace. He offered to give him:

First. The red ribbon.

Second. The Château of Chambord, with its park and its twelve cannon taken from the Austrians.

Third. A million in ready money.

Fourth. Two hundred thousand francs' income, of which a hundred thousand, in case he should marry, would revert to his wife, and fifty thousand to each of his children until the family should become extinct.

Fifth. A hotel in Paris.

Sixth. And lastly, the town of Arbois, General Pichegru's native place, should be re-christened Pichegru, and should be exempt from all taxes for twenty-five years.

Pichegru had flatly refused to give up Huningue.

"I will never enter into a conspiracy," he said. "I do not wish to become a third edition of La Fayette and Dumouriez. My resources are as sure as they are great. They have roots, not only in the army but in Paris, in the departments and in the generals who are my colleagues, and who think as I do. I ask nothing for myself. When I have succeeded I shall take my reward. But I am not ambitious. You may make your minds easy on that score at once. But to induce my soldiers to shout 'Long live the King!' they must each have a full glass in their right hand and six livres in the left.

"I will cross the Rhine, and enter France with the white flag; I will march upon Paris; and, for the benefit of his Majesty Louis XVIII., I will overturn whatever government may be there when I arrive.

"But my soldiers must receive their pay every day, at least until we have made our fifth day's march upon French soil.

"They will give me credit for the rest."

The negotiations had fallen through on account of the Prince de Condé's obstinacy in insisting that Pichegru should proclaim the king on the other side of the Rhine, and give up the town of Huningue.

Although he possessed this precious document, Bonaparte had refused to use it. It would have cost him too much to betray a general of Pichegru's renown, whose military talent he admired and who had been his master at Brienne.

But he was reckoning none the less on what Pichegru could accomplish as a member of the Council of the Ancients, when, on that very morning, just as he was about to make a military reconnoissance in the neighborhood of Milan, he had received a letter from his brother Joseph, telling him that not only had Pichegru been elected a member of the Five Hundred, but that by unanimous choice he had been made their president.

He was therefore doubly armed with his former popularity with his soldiers and his new civic power.

Hence Bonaparte's sudden decision to send a messenger to Augereau informing him that he wished to see him.

The duel which he had witnessed and the cause which had led to it had not been without their weight in the scale of his ambition. But the two combatants little dreamed that they had largely contributed toward making Augereau a marshal of France, Murat a prince, and Bonaparte an emperor.

Nor would aught of this have come to pass, had not the 18th Fructidor, like the 13th Vendémiaire, destroyed the hopes of the royalists.

CHAPTER XV

AUGEREAU

On the next day, while Bonaparte was dictating his letters to Bourrienne, Marmont, one of his favorite aides-de-camp, who was discreetly looking out of the window, announced that he could distinguish at the end of the avenue the waving plume of Murat and the somewhat massive form of Augereau.

Murat was then, as we have said, a handsome young man of twenty-three or four. He was the son of an innkeeper of Labastide, near Cahors; and his father being also postmaster, Murat, at an early age, learned how to manage horses, and in time became an excellent horseman. Then through I know not what caprice of his father's (who probably wanted to have a prelate in the family), he had been sent to a seminary, where, if we may judge from the letters which are lying before us, his studies did not extend so far as to give him a proper knowledge of orthography.

Luckily, or unluckily for him, the Revolution opened the doors of the seminaries. Young Joachim took flight and enlisted in the Constitutional Guard of Louis XVI., where he distinguished himself by his extreme opinions, his duels, and his courage.

Dismissed, like Bonaparte, by that same Aubry who in the Five Hundred continued to wage such severe war upon patriots, he met Bonaparte, became intimate with him, hastened to place himself under his orders on the 13th Vendémiaire, and followed him to Italy as aide-de-camp.

Augereau, whom the reader will remember having met at Strasbourg, where he gave young Eugene de Beauharnais fencing-lessons, was seventeen years older than Murat, and had already, when we renew our acquaintance with him, reached his fortieth year. After having stagnated for fifteen years in the lower grades, he had been transferred from the Army of the Rhine to the Army of the Pyrenees, under Dugommier.

It was in that army that he won successively the grades of lieutenant-colonel, colonel, and brigadier-general, in which last capacity he defeated the Spaniards on the banks of the Fluvia in such brilliant fashion that he was at once elevated to the rank of general of division.

We have spoken of the peace with Spain, and have given expression to our opinion upon that peace, which made a neutral sovereign, if not an ally, of one of the nearest relatives of Louis XVI., whose head had just fallen by order of the Convention.

After the peace was signed, Augereau joined the Army of Italy under Schérer, and contributed largely to the victory of Loano. At last Bonaparte appeared, and then began the immortal campaign of '96.

Like all the older generals, Augereau deeply deplored the fact, which fairly aroused his scorn, that a young man of twenty-five should be given command of the most important army of France. But when he had marched under the young general's orders; when he had contributed his share toward the taking of the pass of Millesimo; when, as a result of a manœuvre suggested by his young colleague, he had beaten the Austrians at Dego, and had captured the redoubts of Montellesimo without knowing to what end they had been taken—then he appreciated the power of the genius which had conceived the clever scheme of separating the Sardinians from the imperial troops, thereby assuring the success of the campaign.

He went directly to Bonaparte, confessed his former predispositions, and apologized manfully, and, like the ambitious man he was, while realizing his lack of training, which must indubitably operate against him, he asked Bonaparte to allow him to share in the rewards which the latter distributed to his young lieutenants.

The fact that Augereau, one of the bravest of the generals of the Army of Italy, had, on the day succeeding this interview, carried the intrenched camp of Ceva, and penetrated into Alba and Casale, made it all the easier for Bonaparte to grant this request. Finally, meeting the enemy at the bridge of Lodi, which bristled with cannon and was defended by a terrible fire, he rushed upon the bridge at the head of his grenadiers, took thousands of prisoners, released Masséna from a difficult position, and took Castiglione, which was one day converted into a duchy for him. At last came the famous day of Arcola, which was to crown for him a campaign which he had made glorious by so many daring exploits. There, as at Lodi, the bridge had to be crossed. Three times he led his soldiers to the middle of the bridge, and three times they were repulsed by a storm of grape-shot and canister. Finally, perceiving that his ensign had fallen, he seized the flag, and with head down, not knowing whether he was followed or not, he crossed the bridge and found himself in the midst of the

enemy's artillery and bayonets. But this time his soldiers, who adored him, followed. The guns were captured and turned against the enemy.

The victory, one of the most glorious of the campaign, was so justly recognized as being entirely due to his valor, that the government presented him with the flag which he had used to arouse the ardor of his soldiers.

Like Bonaparte, he also reflected that he owed everything to the Republic, and that the Republic alone could give him all to which his ambition aspired. Under a king, as he well knew, he would not have risen above the grade of sergeant. The son of a mason and a fruit-seller, a common soldier and a fencing master at the outset of his career, he had become a general of division, and at the first opportunity he might, thanks to his own courage, become commander-in-chief; like Bonaparte, although he was not endowed with his genius; like Hoche, although he did not possess his integrity; or like Moreau, although he had not his learning.

He had just given proof of his cupidity, which had injured him somewhat with those pure Republicans who sent their gold epaulets to the Republic to be melted up, and wore woollen ones in their stead, until gold should be plentiful.

He had allowed his soldiers three hours' pillage in the town of Lago, which had risen against him. He did not take active part in the pillage, it is true, but he bought at a ridiculously low figure all the articles of value which his soldiers had brought away. He had with him an army wagon, which was said to contain property worth a million; and "Augereau's wagon" was known throughout the army.

Having been notified by Marmont, Bonaparte was expecting him.

Murat entered first and announced Augereau. Bonaparte thanked Murat with a gesture, and intimated that he and Marmont should leave them alone. Bourrienne also rose to go, but Bonaparte detained him by a movement of the hand; he had no secrets from his secretary.

Augereau entered. Bonaparte held out his hand to him, and motioned to him to sit down. Augereau sat down, put his sword between his legs, his hat on its hilt, his arms on the hat, and asked: "Well, general, what is it?"

"It is," said Bonaparte, "that I want to congratulate you upon the fine spirit of your army corps. I stumbled upon a duel yesterday, when one of your soldiers was fighting a comrade from Moreau's division, because the latter had called him monsieur."

"Ah!" said Augereau. "The fact is that I have some rascals who will not listen to reason on that score. This is not the first duel that has been fought for that very reason. Therefore, before leaving Vicenza this morning, I published an order of the day forbidding any man of my division to make use, either verbally or in writing, of the word monsieur, under penalty of being degraded from his rank, or if he were a common soldier, depriving him of the right to serve in the armies of the Republic."

"Then, having taken this precaution," said Bonaparte, looking fixedly at Augereau, "you do not think, do you, that there will be anything to prevent your leaving your division for a month or two?"

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed Augereau; "and why should I leave my division?"

"Because you have asked my permission to go to Paris on personal matters of business."

"And a little on your affairs, also, eh?" said Augereau.

"I thought," said Bonaparte dryly, "that you knew no distinction in our affairs?"

"No, no," said Augereau, "and you should be pleased that I am modest enough to be satisfied always with second place."

"Have you not the second place in the Army of Italy?" asked Bonaparte.

"To be sure; but I did a little something toward that myself, and circumstances may not always be so favorable."

"You see," said Bonaparte, "that when you are no longer useful in Italy, or when opportunities are few, I find occasion for you to be useful in France."

"Why? Tell me. Are you sending me to the assistance of the Republic?"

"Yes, unfortunately, the Republic is in poor hands just now; but poor as they are, it still lives."

"And the Directory?"

"Is divided," replied Bonaparte. "Carnot and Barthélemy incline toward royalty, and they have with them, it must be

confessed, the majority of the councils. But Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillière-Lepaux stand firm for the Republic and the Constitution of the Year III., and they have us behind them."

"I thought," said Augereau, "that they had thrown themselves into Hoche's arms."

"Yes; but it will not do to leave them there. There must be no arms in the country that are longer than ours; and ours must reach beyond the Alps, and if necessary bring about another 13th Vendémiaire at Paris."

"Well, why do you not go yourself?" asked Augereau.

"Because if I went it would be to overthrow the Directory and not to sustain it. And I have not done enough yet to play the part of Cæsar."

"And you send me to play the part of your lieutenant. Well! that satisfies me. What is there to be done?"

"Make an end of the enemies of France, who were only half wiped out on the 13th Vendémiaire. As long as Barras pursues a Republican course, second him to the best of your ability and courage; if he hesitates, resist him; if he betrays, collar him as you would the meanest citizen. If you fail, I shall be in Paris within the week with twenty-five thousand soldiers."

"Well," said Augereau, "I will try not to fail. When shall I start?"

"As soon as I have written the letter which you are to take to Barras." Then, turning to Bourrienne, he said: "Write."

Bourrienne had paper and pen in readiness, and Bonaparte dictated as follows:

CITIZEN-DIRECTOR—I send you Augereau, my right arm. For everybody else he is in Paris on a furlough, having some business to attend to; for you he is the director who keeps pace with us. He brings you his sword, and he is instructed to say to you that, in case of need, you may draw upon the budget in Italy to the extent of one, two, or even three millions.

It is, above all, in civil wars that money becomes the vital nerve.

I hope in the course of a week to hear that the councils are purified, and that the Clichy Club no longer exists.

Health and fraternity, BONAPARTE.

P.S.—What is all this we hear about robberies of diligences along the highroads of the Midi by Chouans, under the name of Companions of Jehu? Put your hand on four or five of the rascals and make an example of them.

Bonaparte, according to his habit, read over the letter, and then signed it with a new pen, which did not make his writing any more legible; then Bourrienne sealed it and gave it to the messenger.

"Tell them to give Augereau twenty-five thousand francs from my cash-box, Bourrienne," said Bonaparte. And to Augereau he added: "When you are out of funds, citizen-general, send to me for more."

CHAPTER XVI

THE CITIZEN-DIRECTORS

It was time for the citizen-general Bonaparte to turn his eyes toward the citizen-directors. There had been an open rupture, as we have said, among the five elect of the Luxembourg. Carnot and Barthélemy had drawn completely apart from their colleagues, Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillière-Lepaux.

The result was that the ministry could not continue as it was, some of the ministers being creatures of Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillière-Lepaux, while others followed Carnot and Barthélemy.

There were seven ministers: Cochon, Minister of Police; Bénézech, Minister of the Interior; Truguet, Minister of Marine; Charles Delacroix, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Ramel, Minister of Finance; Merlin, Minister of Justice, and Pétiet, Minister of War.

Cochon, Pétiet, and Bénézech were tainted with royalism. Truguet was haughty and violent and determined to have his own way. Delacroix was not equal to his post. In the opinion of the majority of the directors—Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillière-Lepaux—Merlin and Ramel alone should be retained.

The opposition, on the other hand, demanded the removal of four ministers—Merlin, Ramel, Truguet, and Delacroix.

Barras yielded up Truguet and Delacroix; but he cut off three others who were members of the Five Hundred, and whose loss would greatly trouble the two Chambers. These were, as we have said, Cochon, Pétiet, and Bénézech.

We hope that Madame de Staël's salon has not been forgotten. It was there, it will be remembered, that the future author of "Corinne" formed a coterie of opinion, almost as influential as that of the Luxembourg or the Clichy Club.

Now, Madame de Staël, who had made one minister under the monarchy, was haunted with the desire to make another under the Directory.

The life of her candidate had been an eventful one, interesting because of its many changes. He was forty-three years old, a member of one of the foremost families of France, born lame like *Mephistopheles*, whom he resembled somewhat in face and mind—a resemblance which increased when he found his *Faust*. Destined for the Church because of his infirmity, although the eldest of his family, he had been created Bishop of Autun at the early age of twenty-five. Then came the Revolution. Our bishop adopted all its principles, was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly, suggested the abolition of ecclesiastical tithes, celebrated mass on the Champ de Mars on the day of the Federation, blessed the flags, admitted the new constitution of the clergy, and consecrated bishops who took the oath, which led to his excommunication by Pope Pius VI.

Sent to London by Louis XVI., to assist the French ambassador, Monsieur de Chauvelin, he received an order to withdraw from the cabinet of Saint James in 1794; and at the same time he learned from Paris that he had been accused by Robespierre.

This double proscription proved fortunate for him; he was ruined, and went to America, where he accumulated another fortune in commerce. He returned to Paris some three months before the time of which we are writing.

His name was Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord.

Madame de Staël, a woman of great intellect, had been attracted by the man's charming wit; she knew the depths that lay beneath her new friend's assumed frivolity. She introduced him to Benjamin Constant, who was her *cicisbeo* at the time, and Benjamin put him in communication with Barras.

Barras was enchanted with our prelate. After being presented by Madame de Staël to Benjamin Constant, and by Benjamin Constant in turn to Barras, he induced Barras to present him to Rewbell and La Reveillière-Lepaux. He won them as he won everybody else, and it was agreed that he should be made Minister of Foreign Affairs in Bénézech's stead.

The members of the Directory held a meeting to elect by secret ballot the members of the various ministries who should

succeed those who were retiring. Carnot and Barthélemy, not ignorant of the agreement between their three colleagues, imagined that they could successfully oppose them. But they realized their mistake when they perceived that the three were unanimous in their choice of those who were to go, those who were to remain, and those who were to come in.

Cochon, Pétiet, and Bénézech were dismissed; Ramel and Merlin were retained. Monsieur de Talleyrand was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs; Pléville-Lepel, Minister of Marine; François de Neufchâteau went to the Department of the Interior, and Lenoir-Laroche to the Police Department.

They also nominated Hoche, Minister of War; but he was only twenty-eight, and the requisite age was thirty.

It was this selection that had disturbed Bonaparte in his headquarters at Milan. The secret session had terminated with a violent altercation between Barras and Carnot. Carnot reproached Barras for his luxurious mode of life and his dissolute habits. Barras accused Carnot of defection to the royalist factions. From accusations they passed to the vilest insults.

"You are only a vile rascal!" Barras said to Carnot. "You have sold the Republic, and now you wish to cut the throats of those who defend it. Wretch, brigand!" he continued, rising and shaking his fist in the other's face; "there is not a citizen who would not be justified in spitting in your face."

"Very good," replied Carnot; "I will answer your insults between now and to-morrow."

The next day passed, but Barras was not visited by Carnot's seconds. The affair had no further consequence.

The appointment of this ministry, in which the two councils had not been consulted, caused a great sensation among the representatives. They resolved at once to organize for a struggle. One of the advantages of counter-revolutions is that they furnish historians with documents which they would not otherwise be able to obtain.

And indeed, when the Bourbons returned in 1814, each one tried to outdo the rest in proving that he had conspired against the Republic or the Empire—that is to say, that he had helped to betray his country.

Their object was to claim the reward of treason; and thus it was that we became acquainted with all the conspiracies which precipitated Louis XVI. from his throne; conspiracies of which the people had but a vague notion under the Republic and the Empire, because proofs were lacking.

But in 1814 these proofs were no longer lacking. Each man presented the proofs of his treason with his right hand and held out the left for reward.

It is therefore to that epoch of moral degradation and self-accusation that we must turn for the official details of those struggles in which the guilty were sometimes looked upon as victims, and the administrators of justice as oppressors. For the rest, the reader must have perceived that in the work we are now offering to the public gaze, we appear rather as a romantic historian than as a historical novelist. We believe that we have sufficiently proven our imagination, to be permitted on this occasion to prove our exactitude, while preserving at the same time the element of poetical fancy which will make the perusal of this work easier and more attractive than that of history despoiled of its embellishments.

We have, therefore, had recourse to one of those counter-revolutionary revelations to determine how far the Directory was threatened, and how urgent was the *coup d'état* which was decided upon.

We have seen how, passing Bonaparte, the three directors had turned to Hoche, and how this movement in favor of the man who had pacified the Vendée had alarmed the commander of the Army of Italy. It was Barras who had turned to Hoche.

Hoche was preparing an expedition to Ireland, and he had resolved to detach twenty-five thousand men from the Army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, and to take them to Brest. These twenty-five thousand men could pause as they crossed France, in the neighborhood of Paris, and in a day's march could be at the disposal of the Directory.

Their approach drove the denizens of the Rue de Clichy to the last extremity. The principle of a national guard had been established by the Constitution. They, knowing that this national guard would contain the same elements as the Sections, hastened to join the organization.

Pichegru was chosen president and selected to draw up a plan. He presented a plan inspired by all the cleverness of which his genius, combined with his hatred, rendered him capable.

Pichegru was equally bitter against the royalists, because they had not chosen to profit by his devotion to the royalist cause, and against the republicans, because they had punished him for his causeless devotion. He had gone so far as to desire a revolution of which he would be the prime organizer and which would benefit him alone. At that time his

reputation very justly equalled that of his illustrious rivals, Bonaparte, Moreau, and Hoche.

If he had succeeded, Pichegru would have created himself dictator, and, once dictator, he would have opened the way for the return of the Bourbons, from whom he would perhaps have asked nothing but a pension for his father and brother, and a house with a vast library for himself and Rose. The reader will remember who Rose was. It was she to whom he had sent, out of his savings in the Army of the Rhine, an umbrella which little Charles had carried to her.

The same little Charles, who knew him so well, has since said of him: "An empire would have been too small for his genius; a farm would have been too large for his indolence!"

It would take too long to describe Pichegru's scheme for the organization of the national guard; but, once organized, it would have been entirely in his hands. Led by him, and Bonaparte absent, it might have occasioned the downfall of the directors.

A book published by the Chevalier Delarue, in 1821, takes us with him into the club in the Rue de Clichy. The house where the club met belonged to Gilbert des Molières.

All the counter-revolutionary projects, which prove that the 18th Fructidor was not a simple abuse of power and a brutal caprice, emanated from this house.

The Clichians found themselves at a disadvantage by the passage of Hoche's troops and his alliance with Barras. They immediately assembled at their usual meeting-place, formed groups around Pichegru and inquired as to his means of resistance.

Surprised like Pompey, he had no real means at hand. His sole resource lay in the passions of the various Sections. They discussed the projects of the Directory, and concluded, from the change in the ministry and the advance of the troops, that the directors were planning a *coup d'état* against the Corps Legislatif.

They proposed the most violent measures. They wanted to suspend the Directory. They wished to bring charges against its individual members. They even went so far as to suggest that they be outlawed.

But they lacked the strength necessary to achieve this result. They had only the twelve hundred grenadiers who composed the guard of the Corps Legislatif—a part of the regiment of dragoons commanded by Colonel Malo. They finally proposed, in their desperation, to send a squad of grenadiers into each district of the capital to rally round them the citizens who had taken up arms on the 13th Vendémiaire.

This time it was the Corps Legislatif, which, unlike the Convention, roused Paris against the government. They talked much without reaching any decision—as is always the case with those who lack strength.

Pichegru, when consulted, declared that he would be unable to maintain any resistance with the slender force at his disposal. The confusion was at its height when a message came from the Directory with information concerning the march of the troops. It said that Hoche's troops, on their way from Namur to Brest to embark for Ireland, would stop at Paris.

Then arose cries and shouts to the effect that the Constitution of the Year III. forbade troops to approach within a radius of thirty-six miles of Paris. The messenger from the Directory intimated that he had a reply to that objection.

"The commissioner in charge was ignorant of this article of the Constitution. His ignorance was the real cause of this infraction of the laws. The Directory furthermore affirmed that the troops had received orders to retrace their steps at once."

They were obliged to content themselves with this explanation in default of others; but it satisfied no one, and the excitement that it had caused spread from the two councils and the Clichy Club throughout Paris, where each citizen prepared himself for events no less exciting than those which had occurred on the 13th Vendémiaire.

CHAPTER XVII

MADEMOISELLE DE SAINTE-AMOUR'S SICK-HEADACHE

The directors were lodged at the Luxembourg, each according to his tastes and habits rather than his needs.

Barras, the man of action and display, the great lord, the Indian nabob, had taken the whole of the wing which now forms the picture-gallery and its appurtenances. Rewbell and La Reveillière-Lepaux shared the other wing. Carnot had taken the whole ground floor for himself and his brother, and had cut off an immense room for his maps from the rest of the apartment. Barthélemy, who had come last, and who was coldly received by his colleagues because he had shared in the counter-revolution, had contented himself with what was left.

On the evening before the stormy meeting at the Clichy Club had taken place, Barras had returned to his rooms in a bad temper. He had invited no one, intending to pass the evening with Mademoiselle de Sainte-Amour, who had replied to his note, sent two hours earlier, by a charming letter saying that, as ever, she would be delighted to see him.

But when he presented himself at the door at nine o'clock, Suzette answered his ring, coming on tiptoe, and entreating him with hand and voice to be silent, as her mistress had been attacked by one of those violent sick-headaches, for which the faculty had as yet found no remedy, since their cause lay, not in the patient's constitution, but rather in her mind.

The director followed Suzette, walking as cautiously as if he had a bandage over his eyes, and were engaged in a game of blind man's buff. As he passed the door of the boudoir, which was shut, he cast a suspicious glance at it before entering the sleeping apartment, with which we are familiar, and which was lighted only by an alabaster lamp in which perfumed oil was burning, and which was suspended from the ceiling.

There was nothing to be said. Mademoiselle de Sainte-Amour was lying upon her bed of rosewood inlaid with Sèvres porcelain. She was wearing a little lace cap especially reserved for days of great suffering, and spoke in the plaintive voice of one to whom speech is an effort.

"Ah! my dear general!" she said, "how good you are to come; and how I longed to see you."

"Was it not understood that I was to spend the evening with you?" replied Barras.

"Yes, and although I was suffering from this odious headache, I said nothing about it. I wanted so much to see you. When one is suffering, the presence of those one loves is more than ever appreciated."

She languidly withdrew a warm, moist hand from beneath the coverings, and extended it to Barras, who kissed it gallantly, and then seated himself upon the foot of the bed. The pain made the invalid moan.

"Ah!" said Barras, "this is a severe headache, is it not?"

"Yes and no," replied Aurélie; "with a little rest it would pass off. Ah! if I could only sleep!"

The words were accompanied with a sigh that might have made the god of sleep himself envious of the beautiful courtesan.

It is probable that within a week after they were driven from Paradise, Eve played this little comedy of the sick-headache for Adam, which has lasted for six thousand years and which has always been attended with the same success. Men joke about it; women laugh over it; but whenever it is needed the headache hastens to the aid of whoever summons it, and succeeds in getting rid of all importunates.

Barras sat with the beautiful invalid for ten minutes, until she thought that she could decently shut her eyes, half sadly, half smilingly, and permit her breast to rise and fall with that gentle and regular breathing which indicates that while the soul may still be awake the body has already embarked upon the calm ocean of sleep.

Barras laid the hand which he had been holding gently down upon the lace coverlet, deposited a paternal kiss upon the sleeper's white forehead, and bade Suzette tell her mistress that his manifold occupations would possibly prevent him from returning within the next three or four days. Then he left the room on tiptoe as he had entered it. As he passed the boudoir, he longed to push the door open, for something told him that the cause of the fair Aurélie's headache was concealed there. Suzette followed him to the outer door, which she took the precaution to double-lock after him.

When Barras returned to the Luxembourg, his valet informed him that a lady was awaiting him. Barras asked the usual question: "Young or old?"

"She must be young, sir," replied the valet; "but I have not been able to see her face because of her veil."

"How is she dressed?"

"Like a woman in good society, in black satin. She looks like a widow."

"Did you bring her in?"

"I put her in the pink boudoir. If monseigneur should not care to receive her, nothing is easier than to show her out without passing through the cabinet. Will you receive her here, or will you go to the pink boudoir?"

"I will go there," said Barras.

Then, remembering that he might be about to meet a woman of rank, and that the proprieties must be observed even in the Luxembourg, he said to the valet: "Announce me."

The valet went first, opened the door of the boudoir, and said: "Citizen-director Barras."

He drew back at once to give place to him whom he had announced. Barras entered with that grand air which he had derived from the aristocratic world to which he belonged, and to which, in spite of three years of Revolution and two of Directory, he still belonged.

In one of the corners of the room a couch had been built into the wall. A lady was standing there, dressed all in black, as the valet had said, and whose bearing indicated to Barras at a glance that she did not belong to the frail sisterhood.

Putting his hat on the table, he walked toward her, saying:

"You wished to see me, madame, and I am here."

The young woman, with a superb gesture, raised her veil, and disclosed a face of remarkable beauty.

Beauty is the most powerful of all fairies and the most potent introducer. Barras paused a moment as if dazzled.

"Ah! madame," he said, "how fortunate I am, for I intended remaining out a portion of the night, and only a fortuitous circumstance brought me back to the Luxembourg, where such good fortune awaits me! Be good enough to sit down, madame, and tell me to what I owe the pleasure of your visit."

And he made a movement to take her hand and to lead her to the couch from which she had risen when he was announced.

But she, keeping her hands beneath the folds of her long veil, replied: "Pardon, sir; I will remain standing, as befits a suppliant."

"A suppliant! You, madame? A lady like you does not beg, she commands, or at least she demands."

"Well, sir, I demand! In the name of the town which gave birth to us both; in the name of my father, who was your friend; in the name of outraged humanity and in the name of outraged justice, I come to demand vengeance!"

"The word is a hard one to fall from the lips of one so young," said Barras.

"Sir, I am the daughter of the Comte de Fargas, who was assassinated at Avignon by the Republicans, and a sister of the Vicomte de Fargas, who has just been assassinated at Bourg-in-Bresse by the Companions of Jehu."

"Those men again," muttered Barras. "Are you sure, mademoiselle?"

The young girl held out her hand and gave Barras the dagger and the paper.

"What is that?" asked Barras.

"The proof of what I have told you. My brother's body was found three days ago on the Place de la Prefecture, at Bourg, with this dagger in his heart and this paper tied to the hilt of the dagger."

Barras at first examined the weapon with interest. It was forged from a single piece of steel, in the form of a cross, like the ancient daggers of Saint Vehme. The only thing which distinguished it from them was the inscription, "Companions of Jehu," which was engraved upon the blade.

"But," said Barras, "this dagger alone merely raises a presumption. It might have been stolen or forged purposely to lead the officers of justice astray."

"Yes," returned the young girl; "but here is something which should place them on the right track. Read this postscript, written in my brother's own handwriting and signed with his own name."

Barras read:

I die because I have broken a sacred oath; consequently I admit that I deserve death. If you wish to give my body Christian burial, it will be placed to-morrow night in the market-place at Bourg. The dagger which will be found buried in my breast will indicate that I do not die the victim of a cowardly assassination, but of a just vengeance.

VICOMTE DE FARGAS.

"And this postscript was addressed to you, mademoiselle?" asked Barras.

"Yes, sir."

"And you are sure that it is in your brother's writing?"

"It is his writing."

"What does he mean by writing that he 'does not die the victim of a cowardly assassination, but of a just vengeance'?"

"My brother was himself a Companion of Jehu. When arrested he broke his oath and betrayed his comrades." Then she added, with a strange laugh, "I ought to have joined in his stead."

"Wait," said Barras; "there should be a report of this among my papers."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MISSION OF MADEMOISELLE DE FARGAS

Barras, leaving Mademoiselle de Fargas alone for a moment, went to his study; and in a receptacle prepared for his private correspondence he found a letter from the prosecutor of the Republic at Avignon, which gave him an account of the whole affair up to the departure of the Vicomte de Fargas for Nantua.

He gave it to Mademoiselle de Fargas to read. She went through it from end to end, and found that it confirmed what she had heard before she left Avignon.

"Then," she said to Barras, "you have received no news for two days?"

"No," replied the latter.

"That does not speak very well for your police; fortunately, in this instance, I can supply their place."

And she told Barras how she had followed her brother to Nantua; how she had arrived there just in time to learn that he had been abducted from the prison; how the registry had been burned, and how the documents relating to the prosecution had been destroyed; and, finally, how, on awaking the next morning, she had found the body, pierced with a dagger belonging to the Companions of Jehu, on the Place de la Prefecture at Bourg.

Everything which happened in the Midi and the East was so impregnated with mystery that the cleverest agents of the police vainly sought to fathom it. Barras hoped at first that his beautiful visitor could give him information which was not generally known; but her sojourn, both at Nantua and Bourg, while it had brought her in touch with the scene of events and placed their results before her eyes, had taught her nothing new.

All that Barras knew and could tell her was that these events bore a close resemblance to the occurrences in Brittany and the Vendée.

The Directory was perfectly cognizant of the fact that these dread robbers of diligences did not carry on their work for their own benefit, but turned the government money over to Charette, Stofflet, the Abbé Bernier, and Georges Cadoudal.

Charette and Stofflet had been captured and shot, and the Abbé Bernier had submitted. But, breaking his parole, instead of going to England, he had remained concealed in his own country. So that a year and a half after the pacification the Directory had felt sufficiently secure to recall Hoche and send him to the Army of the Sambre-et-Meuse. Then had come the report of a new insurrection; and by repeated blows the Directory had learned that four new leaders had appeared in the country—Prestier, D'Autichamp, Suzannette, and Grognon. As for Cadoudal, he had never parleyed or laid down his arms; he had never ceased endeavoring to prevent Brittany from recognizing the Republican government.

Barras had seemed for a moment to come to a resolution; but, like all chance ideas, which at first seem impossible, it apparently needed time to ripen before leaving the mind which had conceived it. From time to time he glanced at the proud young girl, then at the dagger, which he still held in his hand, and then at the Vicomte de Fargas's farewell letter, which he had laid upon the table. Diane grew weary of the silence.

"I have demanded vengeance at your hands," she said, "and you have not answered me."

"What do you mean by vengeance?" asked Barras.

"I mean the death of those who killed my brother."

"Tell me their names," returned Barras; "we are as desirous as you are that they should expiate their crimes. Once captured, their punishment will not be slow to follow."

"If I knew their names," replied Diane, "I should not have come to you; I should have used this dagger on them myself."

Barras looked at her.

The calm voice with which she had uttered these words was abundant proof that her ignorance had alone deterred her from taking the law into her own hands.

"Well," said Barras, "you can search for them and we will do the same."

"I search?" resumed Diane. "Is that my business? Am I the government? Am I the police? Is it my duty to provide for the

safety of citizens? They arrested my brother and put him in prison. The prison which belongs to the government must answer to me for my brother. The prison opens and betrays its prisoner; the government must answer to me for that. Therefore, since you are the head of the government, I come to you and say: 'My brother! my brother! my brother!'"

"Mademoiselle," replied Barras, "we live in troublous times, when even the keenest eye can scarcely see, when the stoutest heart hesitates, though it does not weaken, when the strongest arm bends and falters. In the East and the Midi we have the Companions who assassinate, in the West we have the Vendéans and the Bretons who fight. We have three-quarters of Paris conspiring, two-thirds of our chambers in opposition to us, and two of our colleagues betraying us. In the midst of this universal strife you ask that the great machine, which, in watching over its own safety, protects the saving principles which will transform Europe, to close all its eyes and concentrate them upon one point—the Place de la Prefecture where you found the lifeless body of your brother. It is too much to ask of us, mademoiselle; we are simply mortal, and you must not expect us to accomplish the work of gods. You loved your brother?"

"I adored him."

"You wish to avenge him?"

"I would give my life for that of his murderer."

"And if you were shown a means of discovering that murderer, whatever the means, would you adopt it?"

Diane hesitated a moment. Then she said vehemently: "Whatever it might be I would adopt it."

"Well, listen to me," said Barras. "Help us and we will help you."

"What am I to do?"

"You are young and beautiful—very beautiful."

"That is not the point," said Diane, without lowering her eyes.

"On the contrary," said Barras, "it is right to the point. In this great struggle which we call life, woman has been given her beauty, not as a simple gift from Heaven to rejoice the eyes of her lover and her husband, but as a means of attack and defence. The Companions of Jehu have no secret from Cadoudal. He is their real head, since they are working for him. He knows all their names from first to last."

"Well," said Diane, "what then?"

"Why," said Barras, "it is very simple. Go to the Vendée or Brittany and join Cadoudal. Wherever he may be, present yourself to him as a victim of your devotion to the royalist cause, which you really are. Cadoudal cannot see you without falling in love with you. With his love he will give you his confidence. Resolute as you are, and with your brother's memory in your heart, you need grant nothing save what it pleases you to grant. Then you will discover the names of these men for whom we are searching in vain. Tell us the names—that is all we ask of you—and your vengeance shall be satisfied. Now, if your influence over the fanatic should go far enough to induce him to submit to the government, I need hardly tell you that the government would put no bounds—"

Diane extended her hand.

"Take care, sir," she said, "one word more and you will insult me. I ask twenty-four hours for reflection."

"Take as much time as you wish," said Barras, "you will always find me at your service."

"To-morrow, here, at nine o'clock in the evening," replied Diane.

And taking her dagger from Barras's hand, and her brother's letter from the table, she placed them both in her breast, bowed to Barras, and left the room.

The next day, at the same hour, Mademoiselle Diane de Fargas was again announced to the director. Barras passed quickly into the pink boudoir and found her awaiting him.

"Well, my beautiful Nemesis?" he asked.

"I have decided," she replied; "but you understand I need a safe-conduct which will be recognized by the Republican authorities. In the life I am about to take up, it is possible that I may be taken with arms in my hands making war upon the Republic. You shoot women and children; it is a war of extermination. But that is a matter between God and yourselves. I may be taken, but I do not want to be shot before my vengeance is accomplished."

"I have foreseen your request, mademoiselle, and have prepared not only a passport, which will assure you full liberty of movement, but a safe-conduct, which, in extreme need, would force your enemies to become your defenders. I advise you, however, to conceal them both, particularly the latter, from the eyes of the Vendéans and the Chouans. A week ago, wearied of seeing this hydra of civil war springing up continually with new heads, we sent an order to General Hedouville to give no quarter. Consequently, as in the glorious prime of the Republic, when the Convention gained victories by decrees, we have sent down one of the old "drowning-agents" of the Loire, a man who knows the country, named François Goulin, with a new guillotine. The guillotine will be for the Chouans if they are taken, or for the generals of our armies if they allow themselves to be beaten. Citizen Goulin is taking General Hedouville a reinforcement of six thousand men. The Vendéans and the Bretons have no fear of musketry; they march up to it crying, 'Long live the king! long live religion!' and singing hymns. We will see how they meet the guillotine! You will meet, or, rather, you will overtake, these six thousand men who are marching with citizen Goulin from Angers to Rennes. If you are at all afraid, put yourself under their protection until you reach the Vendée, and learn definitely where Cadoudal is, when you will join him."

"Very well, sir," said Diane, "I thank you."

"When will you start?" asked Barras.

"My carriage and my post-horses are waiting at the door of the Luxembourg."

"Permit me to ask you a delicate question, but one which it is my duty to ask you."

"What is it, sir?"

"Do you need any money?"

"I have six thousand francs in gold in my strong-box, and twenty thousand more in paper money. You see that I can make war on my own account."

Barras held out his hand to Mademoiselle de Fargas, who pretended not to notice this act of courtesy.

She made an irreproachable courtesy and retired.

"There is a charming viper," said Barras; "but I should not like to be the one to warm it!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE TRAVELLERS

As Mademoiselle de Fargas had told Barras, a carriage was waiting for her at the door of the Luxembourg. She entered it, saying to the postilion: "The road to Orléans."

The postilion gathered up the reins, the little bells tinkled, and the carriage sped down the road toward the barrier of Fontainebleau.

As Paris was threatened with disturbances in the near future, all the barriers were carefully guarded, and the gendarmes were ordered to examine carefully any one entering or leaving the city.

Whoever failed to have upon his passport either the signature of the new minister of police, Sothin, or the guarantee of one of the three directors, Barras, Rewbell, or La Reveillière, was obliged to explain at length his reason for entering or leaving Paris.

Mademoiselle de Fargas was stopped at the barrier like every one else; she was forced to descend from her carriage and enter the office of the police commissioner, who, without noticing that she was young and beautiful, asked for her passport with the same unbending dignity as though she had been old and ugly. Mademoiselle de Fargas took the requisite paper from her satchel and handed it to the official. He read it aloud:

Citizeness Marie Rotrou, post-mistress at Vitré (Ille-et-Vilaine).

(Signed) BARRAS.

The passport was in proper form; the commissioner returned it to her with a bow that was intended for the signature of Barras rather than the humble post-mistress. The latter bowed slightly, and retired without noticing a handsome young man of twenty-six who was about to present his passport when she entered, and had drawn back his outstretched arm, with a courtesy which denoted his gentle birth, to allow the beautiful traveller to pass first.

But he followed her immediately. The magistrate took the passport with the customary gravity which characterized the performance of his important duties, and read:

Citizen Sebastien Argentan, tax-collector at Dinan (Côtes-du-Nord).

The passport was signed not only by Barras, but by his two colleagues, and there was therefore even less to criticise about it than there had been about that of Mademoiselle Rotrou's, which was signed by Barras alone.

Receiving his passport, together with a gracious bow from the official, M. Sebastien Argentan mounted a post-horse and trotted slowly away, while the postilion, whose duty it was to precede him and see that his relays were duly ordered, set off at a gallop. All night long the tax-collector rode beside a closed post-chaise, in which he was far from suspecting slept the beautiful girl to whom he had yielded his place.

Day came, and one of the windows was opened to admit the fresh morning air; a pretty head, which had not yet shaken off all traces of sleep, looked out to see the state of the weather, and to his great astonishment he recognized the post-mistress of Vitré travelling by post in a handsome carriage. But he remembered that her passport was signed by Barras, which would explain much in the way of luxury, particularly where a woman was in question.

The tax-gatherer bowed politely to the post-mistress, who, remembering that she had seen him on the previous evening, returned his greeting graciously.

Although he thought the young woman charming, he was too well-bred to approach the carriage, or to speak to her. He urged his horse to a gallop, and, as if the mutual salutation had satisfied his ambition, he disappeared around the first turn of the road.

But he had guessed that his travelling companion, whose destination he knew (having heard her passport read), would breakfast at Etampes. He therefore stopped there himself, arriving half an hour before her.

He ordered the ordinary inn breakfast, to be served in the common dining-room; namely, two chops, half a cold chicken, a little ham; some fruit, and a cup of coffee.

Scarcely had he attacked the chops when the travelling-carriage of Mademoiselle de Fargas drew up before the inn, which was also a post-house. The traveller asked for a private room, crossed the common hall, bowed to her former acquaintance, who had risen on perceiving her, and went upstairs. The question which agitated Monsieur d'Argentan, who wished to make his journey as pleasant as possible, was whether Mademoiselle Rotrou was to eat in her own room or in the public dining-room.

A moment later the question was answered. The maid who had accompanied the traveller upstairs, came down and laid a white cloth on a table, and set a cover thereon. Eggs, fruit, and a cup of chocolate formed the frugal repast of the young woman, who came down just as M. d'Argentan was finishing his breakfast.

The young man noted with pleasure, that while her toilet was simple, it was arranged with sufficient care to indicate that coquetry was not entirely extinct in the heart of the pretty post-mistress. He probably thought that he could overtake her by hard riding, for he, in his turn, declared that he was in need of rest, and desired to be shown to a room. He threw himself on a bed and slept two hours.

In the meantime, Mademoiselle Rotrou, who had slept the whole night, got into her carriage again and resumed her journey. About five o'clock she perceived before her the church steeple of Orléans, and at the same time she heard behind her the gallop of a horse, which, together with the sound of bells, told her that the traveller had overtaken her. The two young people were now acquaintances. They bowed politely, and M. d'Argentan thought that he now had the right to approach the carriage door and ask after the health of the fair occupant. It was easy to see, in spite of the pallor of her complexion, that she was not over-fatigued. He congratulated her politely upon the fact, and confessed that his own manner of travelling, however easy the horse's gait, would not permit him to make the entire journey without a break. He added that if he could only find an opportunity to purchase a carriage, he might continue his journey in that agreeable fashion. This was asking Mademoiselle Rotrou in a roundabout way if she would consent to share her carriage and the expense of it with him.

Mademoiselle Rotrou ignored his hint, and spoke of the weather, which was fine, and of the probability that she herself would be obliged to break her journey for a day or two, either at Tours or at Angers; to which the traveller on horseback made no reply whatever, secretly resolving to stop wherever she did.

It would have been discourteous to remain longer beside the carriage after this overture and its rejection. Monsieur d'Argentan therefore set off at a gallop, telling Mademoiselle Rotrou that he would order her relay at Orléans.

Any other than the proud Diane de Fargas, any one whose heart was not incased in steel, would have noticed the refinement, the courtesy and the beauty of the traveller. But whether she was destined to remain forever indifferent, or whether her heart needed to be more violently appealed to, certain it is that none of all that which would have caught another woman's eye attracted her glance.

Entirely absorbed in her hatred, and wholly unable to dismiss the object of her journey from her mind, even while she smiled she pressed the dagger to her side, as if remorseful for that smile; that dagger which, as we said, opened the way for her brother's soul to precede hers to heaven.

Looking along the road, to see if she were indeed alone, and discerning no one as far as eye could reach, she drew from her pocket the last note her brother had written her, and read and re-read it, as one will impatiently and yet persistently taste of a bitter root. Then she fell back in a doze, and remained thus until the carriage stopped for fresh horses.

She looked about her. The horses were ready, as Monsieur d'Argentan had promised her they would be; but when she inquired after him, she was told that he had gone on ahead.

They stopped five minutes to change horses, then they took the road to Blois.

At the first turn, the young lady saw her handsome courier, riding slowly, as if waiting for her; but this indiscretion, if indiscretion it were, was so inexcusable that it was excused.

Mademoiselle Rotrou soon overtook the rider. It was she this time who spoke first, to thank him for the courtesy he had shown her.

"For my part," replied the young man, "I thank my lucky star for leading me by the same route as yourself to the police commissioner, and there permitting me to yield you my place, and thereby to learn from your passport where you were going. As chance wills it, my road is the same as yours; for while you are going to Vitré, I am going some twenty miles beyond, to Dinan. If you are not to remain in the neighborhood, at least I shall have had the pleasure of making the

acquaintance of a charming person, and of accompanying her at least nine-tenths of the way. On the other hand, if you do remain, as my business requires me to travel to and fro through the departments of the Manche, Nord, and Ille-et-Vilaine, I shall ask permission, when chance recalls me to Vitré, to bring myself to mind, unless that reminder be disagreeable to you."

"I do not know myself how long I shall remain at Vitré" she replied, graciously rather than curtly. "In reward for services rendered by my father, I have been appointed, as you see, post-mistress at Vitré. But I do not think that I shall fill the position myself. I was ruined by the Revolution, and I shall be obliged in some way to take advantage of the favor which the government has bestowed upon me. I think I shall either sell or rent the position, and thus draw an income from it without being obliged to exert myself personally."

D'Argentan bowed low over his horse, as if this confidence were sufficient for him and he were grateful for it to one who was, after all, under no obligation to bestow it.

It afforded an opening for all those topics of conversation on neutral ground which verge upon the private territory of the heart, but do not form a part of it.

Of what better topic could they converse, going, the one to Vitré, the other to Dinan, than of the Chouans, who were desolating the three or four departments which formed the old province of Brittany?

Mademoiselle Rotrou expressed great fear of falling into the hands of men who were called "brigands." But instead of sharing this fear or adding to it, M. d'Argentan declared that he should be the happiest man in the world if such a thing should befall his companion, for he had been a fellow-student with Cadoudal at Rennes, and this would give him an opportunity of finding out whether the famous leader of the Chouans was as stanch in his friendships as he was credited with being.

Mademoiselle Rotrou grew dreamy, and allowed the conversation to drop; then, after a pause, she uttered a weary sigh, and said: "I am indeed more fatigued than I thought. I believe I shall stop at Angers, if only for the night."

CHAPTER XX

"THE BEST OF FRIENDS MUST PART"

Monsieur d'Argentan felt a twofold satisfaction when he heard that Mademoiselle Rotrou intended to stop at Angers. A man had to be as finished a rider as was Monsieur d'Argentan to take a ride like that which he had just taken, from Paris to Angers—even supposing that he had not come a greater distance than Paris—without a halt. He therefore resolved to stop at Angers also, both to seek the needed rest and to improve his acquaintance with his new friend.

Monsieur d'Argentan, notwithstanding the fact that his passport indicated a provincial residence, was so perfect a specimen of refinement that the Parisian stood revealed in him, and not only of Paris, but of the aristocratic quarters of Paris.

His astonishment, therefore, had been great, although he had not betrayed it, when, after exchanging a few words with so beautiful a creature, who was travelling alone under a passport signed by Barras (which was in itself a significant fact), he found that the conversation did not bring them into more intimate relations, and that the acquaintance went no further.

When he left the police commissioner's office and had ridden on ahead, knowing that he was going in the same direction as the traveller whose passport he had heard read aloud, though he did not know how she was travelling, he had promised himself that he would make the journey in her company. But when in the morning he had been overtaken by a luxurious travelling-carriage, and found that it contained the nest of the charming bird of passage whom he had left behind, he had repeated the promise to himself, doubly resolved to keep it.

But, as we have seen, Mademoiselle de Fargas, while responding civilly to his advances, had not permitted him to put the toe of his boot upon the step of the carriage into which he had had the idea of introducing his whole body.

Angers and a night's rest, therefore, came in very comfortably to remove a little of his fatigue, and to permit him, if it were possible, to advance a step further in the intimacy of this unapproachable post-mistress, before the journey should end.

They reached Angers about five o'clock in the evening. About three miles out from the town, the rider approached the carriage, and, bowing to his saddle-bow, he said: "Would it be indiscreet to ask if you are hungry?"

Diane, who divined her travelling-companion's aim, made a motion of the lips which resembled a smile.

"Yes, sir, it would be indiscreet," she replied.

"Indeed, and why?"

"I will tell you. Because I should no sooner have told you that I was hungry than you would have asked permission to go and order my dinner. No sooner would I have given you permission to do so than you would have requested to have it served at the same table with yours. In other words, you would have invited me to take dinner with you, which, as you see, would be an indiscretion."

"Really, mademoiselle," said d'Argentan, "your logic is terrible, and, if I may say so, bears little resemblance to the period in which we live."

"That," retorted Diane with a frown, "is because few women find themselves in the same position as I am in. You see, sir, that I am in deep mourning."

"Are you in mourning for a husband? Your passport describes you as unmarried and not as a widow."

"I am unmarried, and a young girl, sir, if one can remain so after five years of solitude and misfortune. My last relative, he who was everything in the world to me, has just died. Reassure yourself, sir, you have not, in leaving Paris, lost your seductive powers, but I cannot consistently consent to recognize the merits of those who address me, and who see that in spite of my mourning I am young, and that in spite of my grief I am fair. And now I am as hungry as one can be who drinks tears, and who lives on memories instead of hopes. I will dine as usual in the same room with you, assuring you that under any other circumstances, were it only out of gratitude to you for your attentions during the journey, I would have dined at the same table with you."

The young man rode up as close to her as the rapid motion of the carriage would permit.

"Madame," said he, "after your frank avowal, it remains for me to assure you that if, in your unprotected state, you should

need a friend, you have one at hand, and though it be only a friend of the highroad, he is as true as any you will find."

Then setting off at a gallop, he went, as he had suggested, to order dinner for two.

But as the hour of Mademoiselle Rotrou's arrival coincided with that of the table d'hôte, Monsieur d'Argentan had the delicacy to say that his companion would dine in her own room, even at the risk of not seeing her again. At the table nothing was talked of except the six thousand men whom the Directory had sent to bring Cadoudal to terms.

During the last two weeks Cadoudal had struck blows more audacious than any that had been attempted by the most adventurous generals who had served in the Vendée and Brittany during the bloodiest times of the war in those provinces.

Monsieur d'Argentan, the tax-collector of Dinan, inquired persistently as to the route which the little corps had taken. He was informed that there was the utmost uncertainty concerning that point, because the man in command, who, though not wearing the uniform, seemed absolute with them, had said at that very inn that his route would depend upon certain information which he was to receive at the little village of Châteaubriant, and that it would also depend upon the whereabouts of his adversary whether he plunged into the Morbihan or skirted the hills of Maine.

When he had finished dinner, Monsieur d'Argentan sent a message to Mademoiselle Rotrou, asking whether she would do him the honor to receive him, as he had a communication to make which he believed to be of much importance.

She replied that she would do so with pleasure.

Five minutes later he entered her room, where she received him, sitting at an open window. Mademoiselle Rotrou pointed to an armchair, and motioned to him to be seated. He thanked her with a slight bow, and contented himself with leaning on the back of the chair.

"As you might think, mademoiselle," said he, "that regret at parting so soon from you has led me to seek a pretext for seeing you again, I will come straight to the point. I do not know whether or not you are desirous of meeting, at some three hundred miles from Paris, those extra-judicial agents of the government, who become more tyrannical the further they get from the centre of power. What I do know is that we are on the eve of meeting a considerable Republican column led by one of those wretches whose business it is to look for heads for the government. It seems that shooting has been adjudged too noble a death for the Chouans, and the guillotine is to be naturalized on the soil of Brittany. The troops will have to choose between two roads at Châteaubriant, a village some fifteen miles from here, and will either march straight to the sea, or skirt the Côtes-du-Nord and the Morbihan. Have you any reason to fear them? If so, whichever road you take—and even if you have to pass the entire column from beginning to end—I will remain with you. If, on the contrary, you have nothing to fear from them (and I hope you will not mistake the motive which prompts the question), as I have myself only a moderate liking for tri-colored cockades, envoys extraordinary, and the guillotine—you see how frank I am—I will avoid the column and will take the road to Dinan, which does not suggest itself to their fancy."

"First, let me thank you with all my heart, sir," said Mademoiselle Rotrou, "and assure you of my gratitude, but I am not going as you are to Dinan, but to Vitré. If the column has taken the road to Rennes, which is that of Dinan, I shall have no fear of meeting it. If, on the contrary, it has taken that of Vitré, it will not deter me from following it also. I have not much more liking than you for tri-colored cockades, envoys extraordinary, and guillotines; but I have no reason to fear them. I will even go further. I was informed of these men and of what they carry with them; and as they are to cross that part of Brittany which was occupied by Cadoudal, I was authorized, in case of necessity, to put myself under their protection. All will therefore depend upon their leader's decision. If they continue on the road to Vitré, I shall regret being obliged to part from you at the crossroad. If, on the contrary, they take the road to Rennes, and your dislike is so great as to cause you to avoid them, I shall owe to that dislike the pleasure of continuing my journey with you until I have reached my destination."

Monsieur d'Argentan's explanation when he entered forbade his lingering, now that his errand had been discharged. He bowed and went out, while Mademoiselle Rotrou rose from her chair.

At six o'clock they started, therefore, after the customary greetings. At Châteaubriant they learned that the column had left an hour earlier by the road to Vitré. Consequently the two travellers were obliged to separate. Monsieur d'Argentan approached Mademoiselle Rotrou, renewed his offer of service, and said farewell in a voice full of emotion.

Mademoiselle Rotrou raised her eyes toward the young man, and being too much a woman of the world herself not to be grateful for the respect which he had shown her, she gave him her hand to kiss.

Monsieur d'Argentan mounted his horse, and called out to the postilion who preceded him, "Road to Rennes!" while Mademoiselle Rotrou's carriage, obedient to the order which she gave in a voice as calm as usual, took the road to Vitré.

CHAPTER XXI

CITIZEN FRANÇOIS GOULIN

Mademoiselle Rotrou, or rather, Diane de Fargas, fell into a profound revery after leaving Châteaubriant. In the state of her heart at that time, it was, or so she thought, insensible to all tender sentiments, particularly love. But beauty, refinement, and courtesy will always exercise upon a woman of breeding a sufficient influence to make her dream if not love.

Mademoiselle de Fargas, therefore, dreamed of her fellow-traveller, and for the first time a suspicion occurred to her. She began to ask herself how it was that a man so amply protected by the triple signature of Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillière-Lepaux should evince such an unconquerable repugnance toward the agent of a government which had honored him with such noteworthy confidence.

She forgot that she herself, whose sympathies were far from being with the Revolutionary government, was travelling under the same protection; and even supposing Monsieur d'Argentan to be an aristocrat, which she surmised to be the case from some words he let fall during their last interview, it was possible that, under the stress of circumstances like hers, he had availed himself of a protection which he was somewhat ashamed to claim.

Then, too, she noticed that Monsieur d'Argentan, when he dismounted from his horse, always removed a valise from the saddle whose weight seemed somewhat disproportionate to its size.

Although the young man was strong and vigorous, as if to divert suspicion he often carried it with one hand, as he would a valise containing a mere change of clothing. But it taxed his strength far more than he was willing to have it appear.

Was he carrying money? If so, he was a curious kind of tax-gatherer, to be carrying money from Paris to Vitré, instead of sending it from Vitré to Paris.

While the constant revolution of the wheel of Fortune made it difficult to determine such matters accurately, Mademoiselle de Fargas was too familiar with the different rounds of the social ladder not to know that it was unusual to find an insignificant tax-collector of an obscure canton at the furthest extremity of France, who rode like an English gentleman and expressed himself with the courtesy which had about it the indelible perfume of gentle birth. And this was especially noticeable toward the close of a period when everybody had put on a varnish of vulgarity to please the powers that were.

She asked herself—without a flutter of the heart, however—who the unknown could be, and what motive had induced him to travel with a passport that was certainly not his own.

By a curious coincidence, when Monsieur d'Argentan left Diane de Fargas he asked himself the same questions about her.

Suddenly, just as they reached the summit of the hill which guarded the entrance of the post-town of La Guerche, from which the road was visible for miles around, Diane was startled and dazzled by the gleam of gun-barrels, reflecting the light of the sun. The road looked like an immense river of flashing steel. It was the Republican column, whose advance guard had already reached La Guerche, while the rest of the troops were still a mile and a half behind them.

Everything was of importance in these troublous times, and, as Diane paid her attendants well, the postilion asked her whether he should take his place in the rear of the column, or drive along the side of the road without slackening his pace, and thus reach La Guerche.

Mademoiselle de Fargas told him to raise the top of the carriage, that she might not be made the object of undue curiosity, and to drive on without slackening his speed. The postilion did as she bid him; and then, remounting his horse, set off at the smart pace at which the horses of the Department of Posts used to make their six miles an hour. As a result, Mademoiselle de Fargas duly reached the gates of La Guerche. When we say gates, we mean the beginning of the street which branched into the Châteaubriant road.

There they found an obstruction, in the nature of an immense machine, drawn by twelve horses, on a truck which was too wide to pass the gates, and which blocked the entire road.

Mademoiselle de Fargas, seeing that her carriage had stopped, and not knowing the reason, put her head through the open window, and said: "What is the matter, postilion?"

"The matter is, citizeness," replied the postilion, "that our streets are not wide enough for the things they wish to carry through them, and they will have to dig up one of the posts before M. Guillotin's machine can enter La Guerche."

And, in fact, as François Goulin had decided to travel for the edification of towns and villages, it happened, as the postilion had said, that the street was too narrow, not for the machine itself, but for the sort of rolling platform on which it was set up.

Diane gazed at the horrible thing that obstructed the road; then, realizing that this must be the scaffold, which she had never seen before, she quickly turned her head away, exclaiming: "Oh! how horrible!"

"How horrible! how horrible!" repeated a voice in the crowd. "I should like to know who is the aristocrat who speaks thus disrespectfully of the instrument which has done more for human civilization than any invention since that of the plow?"

"It is I, sir," said Mademoiselle de Fargas; "and if you have anything to do with it, I should be much obliged if you would aid my carriage to enter La Guerche as soon as possible. I am in haste."

"Ah! you are in haste," said a thin, dried-up little man, dressed in the ignoble *carmagnole* or jacket which had not been worn for the last two years or so. He was white with rage. "Ah! you are in haste! Well, you will have to get out of your carriage, and you will have to go on foot—if so be that we let you go at all."

"Postilion!" said Diane, "lower the top of the carriage."

The postilion obeyed. The young girl threw aside her veil, disclosing her marvellous face.

"Can it be, perchance, that I am talking to citizen François Groulin?" asked she mockingly.

"I believe you are mocking me," said the little man, darting toward the carriage, and arranging the red cap, now out of fashion for some time, but which citizen François Groulin had determined to bring into fashion again in the provinces.

"Well, yes, it is I. What have you to say to me?"

And he stretched out his hand toward her as if he would take her by the throat. Diane sprang to the other side of the carriage.

"In the first place," said she, "if you must touch me, which I do not think at all necessary, put on gloves. I detest dirty hands."

Citizen Groulin summoned four men, presumably to order them to seize the beautiful traveller; but from a secret pocket in her satchel Diane had drawn out the safe-conduct which Barras had given her.

"I beg your pardon, citizen," she said, still mocking him, "but do you know how to read?"

Goulin gave a cry of rage.

"You do?" said she. "Then read this; but take care not to crumple the paper too much, for it may be useful to me again if I am to meet many more such boors as you." And she held out the paper to him. It contained only a few words:

In the name of the Directory, the civil and military authorities are ordered to protect Mademoiselle Rotrou in her mission, and to afford her armed assistance, if she claims it, under penalty of dismissal.

Paris, the——

BARRAS.

Citizen François Goulin read and re-read the safe-conduct of Mademoiselle de Fargas. Then, like a bear who is forced by his master, whip in hand, to make his bow, he said:

"These are singular times when women, and women too in silk dresses and carriages, are permitted to give orders to citizens who bear the outward and visible signs of Republicanism and equality. Since we have only changed our king, and you have a passport from King Barras, you may go, citizeness; but you may rest assured that I shall never forget your name, and if ever you fall into my hands——"

"Postilion, see if the road is clear," said Mademoiselle de Fargas in her usual tones. "I have no further business with monsieur."

The road was not yet clear, but by turning aside the carriage managed to pass.

Mademoiselle de Fargas reached the post-house with great difficulty, for the road was crowded with Republicans. There she was obliged to stop. She had eaten nothing since she had left Châteaubriant, and as she wished to sleep at Vitré, it was imperative that she should take some nourishment at La Guerche. She asked for a room, and ordered something to be served in it. Scarcely had she begun her breakfast, however, than she was informed that the colonel commanding the column wished to pay his respects to her.

She replied that she had not the honor of the colonel's acquaintance, and that unless he had something of importance to say to her she begged him to excuse her.

The colonel insisted, saying that he thought it his duty to warn her of something which he alone knew, and which might prove of the utmost importance to her.

Mademoiselle de Fargas intimated that she would receive him, and Colonel Hulot was announced.

CHAPTER XXII

COLONEL HULOT

Colonel Hulot was a man of thirty-eight or forty. He had served for ten years under the late king without having been able to rise to the rank of corporal. But as soon as the Revolution had been proclaimed, he had earned one grade after another at the point of his sword, like the brave soldier that he was.

He had learned of the altercation which had taken place at the gate between citizen François Goulin and the pretended Mademoiselle Rotrou.

"Citizeness," he said as he entered, "I have heard of what took place between yourself and the commissioner of the Directory. I need hardly tell you that we old soldiers have no great affection for these fellows who follow the armies with the guillotine as if powder and ball and swords did not give death sufficient pasture to reap in. Hearing that you had stopped at the post-house, I came to you with the sole intention of congratulating you upon the manner in which you had treated citizen Goulin. When men tremble before such wretches it behooves women to prove to them that they are but the fag-ends of the human race, and that they are not worthy to be called rabble by a beautiful mouth like yours. And now, citizeness, have you need of Colonel Hulot? If so, command him."

"Thanks, colonel," said Diane; "if I had anything to fear or to ask I would accept your offer with a frankness equal to that with which you make it. I am going to Vitré, which is the end of my journey, and, as there is but one more stage to make, I think that I am not liable to meet with any inconveniences greater than those which have already befallen me heretofore."

"Hum!" said Colonel Hulot. "I know that Vitré is but some fifteen miles distant, but I also know that the road forms a narrow pass, bordered by furze and thorn brush, most admirably suited to serve as an ambush for my gentlemen, the Chouans. My own opinion is that in spite of our respectable numbers we shall scarcely reach Vitré without being attacked. If you are, as you say, thoroughly vouched for by citizen Barras, you must be a person of considerable importance. Now, one who is so well protected by Barras has everything to fear from Master Cadoudal, who does not feel for the Directory the respect which it deserves. Moreover, I have been officially notified, both personally and as the leader of this column, that a citizeness named Mademoiselle Rotrou, might perhaps claim the favor of travelling under the protection of our bayonets. When I say 'claim the favor,' I merely quote the words in the letter, for, in this case, the favor would be all on my side."

"I am, indeed, Mademoiselle Rotrou, sir, and I am grateful to Monsieur Barras for his kind remembrance. But, as I have already said, all my precautions are taken; and some claims to consideration, which I may call to the attention of the Chouan leader, incline me to believe that I run little danger in that direction. However, colonel, I am equally grateful to you, and I am particularly glad that you share my aversion for the miserable creature whom they have given you for a travelling companion."

"Oh! as for us," said Colonel Hulot, "we are not at all afraid of him. We are no longer in the times of Saint-Just and Lebas, a fact which I must confess I deplore with all my heart. They were brave men who exposed themselves to the same dangers as we ourselves; who fought with us, and who, since they remained on the field at the imminent risk of being shot, had the right to proceed against those who abandoned them. The soldiers did not love them but they did respect them; and when they stretched forth their hands over a head they understood that no one had the right to rescue it from the vengeance of the Republic. But as for our François Goulin, who will run away at the first shot he hears, taking his guillotine with him, there is not a soldier among our six thousand who would let him touch a hair of one of our officers."

Just then Mademoiselle Rotrou was told that her carriage was ready.

"Citizeness," said Colonel Hulot, "it is part of my duty to clear the road along which our column is to pass. I have with me a small detachment of cavalry composed of three hundred hussars and two hundred chasseurs, and I am about to send them—not for you, but for myself—along the road which we are to follow. If you are in need, you have only to apply to the officer in command, and he is under orders to do his utmost to serve you, and even, if you desire it, to escort you as far as Vitré."

"Thank you, sir," said Mademoiselle de Fargas, giving her hand to the old soldier; "but I should never forgive myself were I to imperil the lives of your soldiers, which are so precious as defenders of the Republic, to assure the safety of a life as humble and of as little importance as mine."

With these words Diane went out, escorted by the colonel, who gallantly gave her his hand to assist her to enter the carriage. The postilion was waiting with his horses.

"The road to Vitré," said Diane.

The postilion started. The soldiers drew aside to let the carriage pass; and as they were all aware of the manner in which she had reproved François Groulin, compliments, somewhat coarsely expressed, it is true, but none the less sincere, were not spared her.

As she set out, she heard the colonel shout: "To horse, chasseurs and hussars!"

And from three or four different directions she heard the "boots and saddle" sounded. When they had driven through La Guerche, the postilion stopped, as if to adjust some portion of the harness, and, approaching the carriage, said: "Perhaps the citizeness has business with *them*?"

"With *them*?" repeated Diane astonished.

The postilion winked.

"Why, yes, with *them*."

"Whom do you mean?"

"The friends, of course. They are here to the right and left of the road," and he imitated the hoot of a screech-owl.

"No," replied Diane, "go on; but when you have reached the foot of the hill stop."

"Bah!" muttered the postilion to himself, "you will stop all right enough, little mother."

They were then at the summit of a hill which sloped gently down for more than a mile and a half. Both sides of the road were lined with a thick growth of furze and thorn, which was in places dense enough to conceal three or four men.

The postilion started the horses at the usual pace, and drove down, singing an old Breton song in the Karnac dialect.

From time to time he elevated his voice, as if his song were a signal which the people along the side of the road understood. Diane, who knew that she was surrounded with Chouans, used her eyes to good advantage without uttering a word. This postilion might be a spy, whom Goulin had set to watch her, and she had not forgotten his threat should she give him any advantage over her, or fall into his hands again. Just as they reached the foot of the hill, where a little path crossed the road, a man on horseback sprang out of the woods to stop the carriage: but when he saw that its only occupant was a lady, he raised his hat.

The postilion turned round as he saw him, and said in a low tone: "Do not be afraid; that is General Roundhead."

"Madame," said the horseman, with the greatest politeness, "I believe that you come from La Guerche, and possibly from Châteaubriant."

"Yes, sir," said she, leaning forward in the carriage without exhibiting any fear, although she saw no less than fifty horsemen ambushed along the side of the road.

"Do your political opinions permit you to give me any information concerning the strength of the Republican column which you have left behind you?"

"Both my political opinions and my social conscience permit me to do so," replied the fair traveller with a smile. "The column consists of six thousand men, who have just returned from prisons in England and Holland. They are commanded by a brave man named Colonel Hulot; but they have in their train a miserable wretch whom they call François Goulin, and a horrible machine which they call the guillotine. When I entered the town I had an altercation with the aforesaid François Goulin, who has promised me that I shall make the acquaintance of his machine, if ever I fall into his hands. This made me so popular with the soldiers, who detest their travelling companion, that Colonel Hulot insisted upon an interview with me, and wished to give me an escort as far as Vitré, lest I should otherwise fall into the hands of the Chouans. But as I left Paris with the express intention of falling into the hands of the Chouans, I refused his escort. Then I told the postilion to drive on, and here I am, delighted to meet you, General Cadoudal, and to express to you my admiration for your courage, and the esteem which your character inspired in my breast. As for the escort which was to have accompanied me, there it is just coming out of the town. It consists of two hundred chasseurs and three hundred hussars. Kill as few of those brave fellows as you can, and you will please me."

"I will not conceal from you, madame," replied Cadoudal, "that there will be an encounter between my men and that detachment. Will you go on as far as Vitré, where I will rejoin you after the fight, as I am anxious to learn more definitely the motive of a journey for which you have given me an improbable cause."

"It is none the less the true one," replied Diane; "and as a proof, if you will permit, I will remain to witness the engagement. Since I have to join your army, this will serve as an apprenticeship."

Cadoudal gazed at the little column, which grew in size as it approached, then said to the postilion: "Place madame where she will be in no danger; and if we are beaten, explain to the Blues that I, to her great despair, prevented her from continuing her journey." Bowing to Diane, he added: "Madame, pray for the good cause while I fight for it." Then, darting down the path, he rejoined his ambushed companions.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BATTLE

Cadoudal exchanged a few words with his comrades, and four of them, who were not mounted and who acted as officers to carry his orders into the underbrush and heather, glided away immediately, and passing between the thorn bushes, reached the foot of two sturdy oaks, whose broad branches and thick foliage made a rampart against the sun. These two oaks stood at the two ends of the avenue which the road coming from the town to the crossroad formed.

When they reached this spot, they paused, ready to execute some manœuvre, which no one who did not know the general's plan of battle could have divined.

Diane's carriage was drawn into the crossroad, and she herself was stationed on a little knoll some thirty paces from the road, among a cluster of trees, where she could see without being seen.

The chasseurs and hussars advanced cautiously at a foot-pace. An advance-guard of ten men preceded them, and, like the rest of the troop, marched with the greatest caution. When the last man had left the town, a shot was heard, and a man in the rear-guard fell. This was a signal. The two crests of the ravine which formed the road blazed forth fire. The Blues sought in vain for the enemy who had attacked them. They saw the fire and the smoke, and they felt the bullets, but they could distinguish neither the weapon nor the man who carried it. Confusion seized upon them once they felt themselves the prey of an invisible foe. Each one sought, not to escape death, but to give death for death. Some retraced their steps, others forced their horses to climb the slope; but no sooner did a man's head rise above the crest of the slope than he was shot at close quarters and fell back, overturning his horse with him like the Amazons in Rubens' "Battle of Thermodon."

Others again, and they were the more numerous, pushed forward, hoping to pass the ambush and thus escape the net which had trapped them. But Cadoudal, when he saw this movement, for which he had apparently been waiting, set spurs to his horse, and galloped out, followed by his forty men, to meet them. They fought along the road for about two hundred yards.

Those who attempted to turn back found the way barred by Chouans, who discharged their pieces in their faces and forced them to return. Finally those who pushed forward came in contact with Cadoudal and his men. But after a few moments the latter appeared to give way and fled.

The Blues at once started in pursuit. But scarcely had the last Chouan passed the two great oaks which were guarded by the four men than they began to push with all their strength, and the two giants, which had been previously separated from their roots with an axe, bent toward each other and fell with crashing branches and a tremendous noise upon the road, which they thus closed by an impassable barrier. The Blues were following the Whites so closely that two of their number, together with their horses, were crushed by the falling trees.

The same manœuvre took place at the other end of the road. Two trees dislodged from their bases fell across the road, and their interlacing branches formed a barrier like that which had just closed up the other end of the road. Thus men and horses were caught as in a huge arena, and each Chouan could choose his man, aim at discretion, and bring him down without fail.

Cadoudal and his forty horsemen discarded their horses, which were now useless, and, rifle in hand, were about to join in the struggle, when Mademoiselle de Fargas, who was watching the sanguinary drama with all the ardor of her lion-like nature, suddenly heard the gallop of a horse coming along the road from Vitré, and, turning, she recognized the man with whom she had travelled.

When he saw that Georges and his companions were about to join in the fray, he attracted their attention by shouting: "Stop! Wait for me!"

And no sooner had he joined them, amid cries of welcome, than he leaped from his horse, tossed the bridle to a Chouan to hold, and threw himself upon Cadoudal's neck. Then he selected a rifle, filled his pockets with cartridges, and followed by twenty men, Cadoudal taking the others, he darted into the thicket which lined the left bank of the road, while the general disappeared on the right side.

The redoubled fusillade announced the arrival of these reinforcements for the Whites.

Mademoiselle de Fargas was too much absorbed in watching what was passing before her to pay much attention to

Monsieur d'Argentan's conduct. She understood simply that the pretended tax-gatherer of Dinan was in reality a disguised royalist—which fact explained why he was bringing money from Paris to Brittany, instead of sending it from Brittany to Paris.

The heroic efforts of this little band of five hundred men would furnish material for an epic poem.

Their courage was all the greater as they were, as we have said, fighting against an invisible danger, calling to it, defying it, and shrieking with rage because it would not rise up before them. Nothing could make the Chouans change their deadly tactics. Death flew whistling by, and the Blues simply saw the smoke and heard the report. A man would throw up his hands and fall back in the saddle, and the frightened riderless animal would dash wildly into the thicket and gallop madly on until an invisible hand checked him, and tied his bridle to the branch of a tree.

Here and there in the fields some one of these horses could be seen rearing and tugging at his bridle, trying to escape from the strange master who had just made him prisoner. The butchery lasted an hour. At the end of that time, they heard the drums beating the charge. It was the infantry coming to the assistance of the cavalry.

Colonel Hulot commanded in person. His first care, with the infallible glance of a veteran, had been to get an accurate idea of the ground, and to open an exit for the unfortunates who were confined in this sort of a tunnel into which the Chouans had converted the road.

He had the horses unharnessed from the gun-carriages, the artillery being useless for the sort of combat upon which they were about to engage. The horses were then attached to the fallen trees, which they dragged from their transverse position across the road, thus opening a means of retreat for the stricken cavalry. Then he sent five hundred men to charge along the road, with levelled bayonets, just as if the enemy had been in sight. He ordered the most expert of his sharpshooters to return shot for shot—in other words, whenever a puff of smoke appeared they were to fire straight at it, since it denoted that a man was lying in ambush at that spot. This was almost the only way to reply to the fusillade of the Whites, who almost invariably shot from cover, and rarely showed themselves save at the moment of taking aim. Habit, and, above all, necessity, had made many of the Republican soldiers exceedingly skilful at this quick exchange of shots.

Sometimes the men upon whom they retaliated were killed outright. Sometimes when they fired by guesswork, they were only wounded. In that case they would not move. Their shots were forgotten in the turmoil, and the soldiers frequently passed very near them without discovering them. The Chouans were noted for their marvellous courage in stifling groans which their insufferable agony would have elicited from any other soldier.

The fight lasted until the first shades of night were falling. Diane, who did not lose a single incident, fumed with impatience at not being able to take part in it. She would have liked to don male attire, arm herself with a gun, and rush upon the Republicans, whom she hated. But her costume, and, above all, the lack of a weapon, rendered her helpless.

About seven o'clock Colonel Hulot ordered the retreat to be sounded. In this kind of warfare day was dangerous, but night was more than dangerous, it was fatal.

The sounds of the trumpets and the drums, announcing the retreat, redoubled the ardor of the Chouans. Thus to abandon the field of battle and return to the town was an avowal on the part of the Republicans that they were beaten.

Shots accompanied them to the very gates of La Guerche, leaving three or four hundred dead on the field, ignorant of the losses which the Chouans had sustained, and without a single prisoner—to the intense chagrin of François Goulin, who had succeeded in getting his instrument inside the town, and who had taken it to the other end of the town in order to be near the scene of battle.

All his efforts were now useless, and François Goulin took up his lodgings in a house where he need not lose sight of his precious machine.

Since they had left Paris, neither officer nor soldier had chosen to lodge in the house of the commissioner extraordinary. He had been given a guard of twelve men, and that was all. Four men guarded the guillotine.

CHAPTER XXIV

PORTIA

The day had had no material results for Cadoudal and his men, but the moral effect was immense. All the great Vendéan chiefs had disappeared: Stofflet and Charette were dead; the Abbé Bernier had yielded, as we have said; and, finally, the Vendée had been pacificated by the genius and patience of General Hoche. And we have seen how Hoche himself had disturbed Bonaparte in far-off Italy by offering men and money to the Directory.

Of the Chouannerie and the Vendée, the Chouannerie alone remained. Cadoudal was the only one of the chiefs who had refused to bend the knee. He had published his manifesto and announced that he had taken up arms again. Then, besides the troops still remaining in the Vendée and Brittany, they had sent six thousand men against him.

Cadoudal, with a thousand men, had not only held at bay six thousand veterans who had seen five years of active warfare, but he had driven them back to the town whence they had come, and had killed three or four hundred of them.

Thus the new Breton insurrection had opened with a victory.

When the Blues were fairly in the town, and had posted their sentinels, Cadoudal also ordered a retreat, for he meditated a fresh expedition for the night.

The victorious Chouans could be seen joyfully returning through the thickets of furze and briar which edged the road, and above which, now that they were marching without disguise, they sometimes towered more than a head. They were calling to each other and crowding around one of their number who was playing the bag-pipe, as soldiers follow the trumpet of the regiment. The bag-pipe was their trumpet.

At the bottom of the slope, just where the overturned trees had formed a barricade which the Republican cavalry had been unable to pass, where they had separated to take part in the fight, so did Cadoudal and D'Argentan meet there after it was over. They were overjoyed to meet again, for they had scarcely had time for a hurried greeting before.

D'Argentan, who had not fought for a long time before, had gone into the fray with such good-will that he had got himself a bayonet thrust in the arm. He had thrown his coat over his shoulder in consequence, and appeared with his arm in a sling, improvised from his bloody handkerchief.

As for Diane; she now came down from the little knoll, and approached the two friends with her firm, masculine step.

"What," exclaimed Cadoudal, on perceiving her, "did you remain, my fair Amazon?"

D'Argentan uttered a cry of surprise, for he recognized Mademoiselle Rotrou, the "post-mistress" of Vitré.

"Permit me," said Cadoudal, still addressing Diane, and indicating his companion with a wave of his hand, "to present to you one of my best friends."

"Monsieur d'Argentan?" said Diane, smiling. "I already have the honor of his acquaintance. Indeed we are old acquaintances of three days' standing. We travelled all the way from Paris together."

"Then it would have been his privilege to present me to you, had I not already done so myself." Then, addressing Diane more particularly, he added: "You were going to Vitré, mademoiselle?"

"Monsieur d'Argentan," said Diane, without replying to Cadoudal's question, "on the way you offered to act as my immediate intercessor with General Cadoudal, if I had any request to make of him."

"I was then under the impression, mademoiselle, that you did not know the general," replied D'Argentan. "But when once one has seen you, you need no intercessor, and I answer for it that my friend here will grant you whatever you may ask."

"That, sir," said Diane, "is pure gallantry, and a trick to evade your promise to me. I summon you positively to keep your word."

"Speak, madame. I am ready to second your request with all my power," said D'Argentan.

"I want to join the general's army," said Diane, calmly.

"In what capacity?" asked D'Argentan.

"In the capacity of a volunteer,"—replied Diane coldly.

The two friends looked at each other.

"You hear, Cadoudal?" asked D'Argentan.

Cadoudal's brow grew grave, and his whole countenance assumed a stern expression. Then, after an instant's silence, he said: "Madame, the proposal is a serious one, and deserves serious reflection. I will tell you something curious. I was at first ordained for the church; and I took in my heart all my vows of ordination, which I have never broken. I do not doubt that in you I should gain a charming aide-de-camp of undoubted bravery. I believe that women are as brave as men. But in our old religious Brittany there exist certain prejudices which often force us to discourage too great devotion. Several of my colleagues have received, it is true, the wives and daughters of royalists who have been assassinated, but to them is due the protection and asylum which they demand."

"And how do you know," returned Diane, "that I am not the daughter of an assassinated noble, and perhaps also the sister of another, in which case I have a double claim to the hospitality which I invoke?"

"In that case," said D'Argentan, with a mocking smile, joining in the conversation, "how does it happen that you have a passport signed by Barras?"

"Will you be good enough to show me your own, Monsieur d'Argentan?" asked Diane.

D'Argentan took it laughingly from the pocket of the coat which hung over his shoulder and gave it to her. She unfolded it and read:

Give free passage throughout the territory of the Republic to Citizen Sebastien Argentan, tax-gatherer at Dinan.

(Signed) BARRAS, REWBELL, LA REVEILLIÈRE-LEPAUX.

"And will you be good enough to tell me, sir," said Diane, "how, as a friend of General Cadoudal and fighting against the Republic, you are supposed to have free passage throughout the territory of the Republic, in the character of tax-collector of Dinan. Do not let us lift our masks, sir, let us remove them entirely."

"Faith, that is well answered," said Cadoudal, who was deeply impressed by Diane's coolness and persistency. "Come, speak! How did you get that passport? Explain it to mademoiselle. Perhaps she will then deign to explain how she came by hers."

"Ah!" said D'Argentan, laughing, "that is a secret which I dare not reveal before our prudish friend Cadoudal; however, if you insist, mademoiselle, at the risk of making him blush, I will say that there lives in the Rue des Colonnes at Paris, near the Théâtre Feydeau, a certain Aurélie de Sainte-Amour, to whom Barras can refuse nothing, and who, in turn, can refuse me nothing."

"And furthermore," continued Cadoudal, "the name on the passport conceals another, which is sufficient in itself to give him free passage among Vendéans, Chouans, and royalists who wear the white cockade, whether at home or abroad. Your travelling companion, mademoiselle, who has now nothing to conceal, and whom I will consequently present to you under his real name, is not Monsieur d'Argentan, but Coster de Saint-Victor; and had he given no pledge, heretofore, the wound which he has just received in fighting for our sacred cause—"

"If it needs only a wound to prove one's devotion, that is a very simple matter," said Diane, coldly.

"What do you mean?" asked Cadoudal.

"See!" said Diane.

And drawing the sharp dagger, which had given her brother his death-blow, from her belt, she struck her arm so violently in the place where Coster de Saint-Victor had received his wound that the blade entered on one side and came out on the other.

"And as for the name," said Diane, addressing the wondering young man, "although my name is not Coster de Saint-Victor, it is Diane de Fargas! My father was assassinated four years ago, my brother a week ago."

Coster de Saint-Victor started and glanced at the dagger which she had left in her arm, and, recognizing it as the one which had in his presence done to death the young Lucien, he said: "I am a witness and can testify that this young girl has spoken the truth when she says that she is as worthy as any one to be received into the royalist army, and to be received among us and as one with us in our holy cause."

Cadoudal held out his hand to her.

"From now on," said he, "if you have no father, mademoiselle, I will be your father. If you no longer have a brother, I will be your brother. I know there was once a Roman woman who, fearing her husband's weakness, and to reassure him, pierced her own right arm with the blade of a knife. Since we live in times which force us to conceal our real names, yours will be Portia, henceforth, instead of Diane de Fargas, as in the past. And as you are now one of us, and at the first stroke have won the rank of leader, you will attend the meeting which I am about to hold when the surgeon has dressed your arm."

"Thanks, general," said Diane; "but as for the surgeon, I have no more need of his services than has Monsieur Coster de Saint-Victor; for my wound is no more serious than his."

Drawing the dagger from the wound where it had remained, she slit up her sleeve, revealing her beautiful arm; then, addressing Coster de Saint-Victor, she said, laughingly: "Comrade, be good enough to lend me your cravat."

CHAPTER XXV

CADOUDAL'S IDEA

Half an hour later the Chouans were encamped in a half circle around the town of La Guerche. They bivouacked in groups of ten, fifteen, and twenty, with a fire for each group, and were cooking their supper as peacefully as if a gunshot had never been heard from Redon to Cancale.

The cavalry bivouacked by themselves, on the borders of a little brook which formed one of the sources of the Seiche. Their horses were saddled but not bridled, so that horses as well as men could enjoy their food.

In the midst of the encampment, seated under an immense oak, Cadoudal, Coster de Saint-Victor, Mademoiselle de Fargas, and five or six of the Chouans were gathered. These latter deserve that their pseudonyms of Branche-d'Or, Brise-Bleu, Chante-en-Hiver, Bénédicité, Monte-à-l'Assaut, Cœur-de-Roi, and Tiffauges should be handed down to posterity together with that of their leader.

Mademoiselle de Fargas and Coster de Saint-Victor ate with good appetites, using the hand which was not disabled. Mademoiselle de Fargas had wished to empty her six thousand francs into the general funds, but Cadoudal had refused receiving her money only as a deposit.

The six or seven Chouan leaders whom we have named, ate as if they were not sure of being able to eat on the morrow. But the Whites did not have as many privations to endure as the Republicans, although the latter were able to exact contributions. The Whites, with whom the people of the neighborhood were in entire sympathy, and who paid for whatever they ate, lived in comparative abundance.

As for Cadoudal, preoccupied with some thought which seemed to be struggling in his mind, he went and came, having taken only a glass of water, his customary beverage. He had obtained from Mademoiselle de Fargas all the information which she could give him about François Goulin and his guillotine. He stopped suddenly, and turning to the group of Breton leaders, he said: "I want a willing man to go to La Guerche and get such information as I require."

All rose spontaneously.

"General," said Chante-en-Hiver, "without wronging my comrades, I think I am better fitted than any of them for this mission. My brother lives at La Guerche. I will wait until it is dark, and then I will go to him. If I am stopped I can appeal to him; he will answer for me, and that will be the end of it. He knows the town like his own pocket; we will do whatever you want done, and I will be back with the information within the hour."

"Very well," said Cadoudal, "this is what I have decided upon. You all know that the Blues are dragging a guillotine around with them, to strike terror to our hearts and to intimidate us; and that the infamous Goulin has charge of it. François Goulin, who was, you will remember, the hero of the drownings at Nantes. He and Perdraux were Carrier's tools. They have both boasted of having drowned more than eight hundred priests. Well, Providence has sent this man again, who went to Paris, not only to ask immunity, but reward for his infamous crimes, that he might expiate his ill-doing on the spot where he committed it. He has brought the infamous guillotine among us. Let him perish by the foul instrument that he watches over; he is not worthy of a soldier's bullet. Now we must take both him and his instrument, and transport them to some spot where we are absolute masters, that the execution may not be interfered with. Chante-en-Hiver will go to La Guerche; he will come back and tell us all about the house where Goulin lodges, the place where the guillotine stands, and the number of men who guard it. When we ascertain these facts, I have a plan which I shall explain to you; and if you agree to it we will carry it out this very night."

The chiefs applauded loudly.

"The deuce!" observed Coster de Saint-Victor, "I have never seen a man guillotined, and I have sworn that I would have nothing to do with the abominable machine until my turn came to be beheaded; but when François Groulin is brought to book, I promise to be in the front rank of spectators."

"You hear, Chante-en-Hiver?" asked Cadoudal.

Chante-en-Hiver did not wait for him to speak twice. He laid aside all his weapons with the exception of his knife, with which he never parted. Then, asking Coster de Saint-Victor to look at his watch, and learning that it was half-past eight, he promised to return by ten. Five minutes later he disappeared.

"Now," said Cadoudal, addressing the remaining chiefs, "how many horses were taken on the battlefield, with their saddles, etc.?"

"Twenty-one," said Cœur-de-Roi; "I counted them myself."

"Can we find twenty chasseur or hussar uniforms that are complete?"

"General, there are nearly one hundred and fifty dead on the field of battle," replied Branche d'Or; "we have only to take our pick."

"We must have twenty hussar uniforms, and one of them must belong to a quartermaster-general, or a sub-lieutenant."

Branche-d'Or rose, whistled, collected a dozen men, and started off with them.

"I have an idea," said Coster de Saint-Victor. "Is there a printing-shop at Vitré?"

"Yes," replied Cadoudal; "I had my manifesto printed there the day before yesterday. The manager is a worthy man named Borel, who is entirely with us."

"I have a good mind," said Coster, "since I have nothing else to do, to get into Mademoiselle de Fargas's carriage, go to Vitré, and order some placards inviting the people of La Guerche, including the six thousand Blues, to witness the execution, by his own executioner, and his own guillotine, of François Goulin, government commissioner. It would be a good joke, and it would amuse our people in the Paris salons."

"Do it, Coster," said Cadoudal. "One cannot employ too much publicity and solemnity when God executes justice."

"Forward, D'Argentan, my friend," said Coster; "only some one will have to lend me a jacket."

Cadoudal made a sign, and each of the leaders pulled off his own to offer it to Coster.

"If the execution takes place," he asked, "where will it be?"

"Faith!" said Cadoudal, "three hundred paces from here, at the top of the hill just in front of me."

"That is all I want to know," said Coster de Saint-Victor. And, calling to the postilion, he added: "My friend, as you may take it into your head to object to what I am going to tell you to do, I want to tell you beforehand that all objections will be useless. Your horses are rested and they have eaten; you are rested and you have eaten. You will put the horses to the carriage; and as you cannot return to La Guerche, because the road is obstructed, you will take me to Vitré, to Monsieur Borel, the printer. If you agree to it, you shall have two crowns of six livres each—not assignats, but crowns. If you refuse, one of these lads here will take your place, and will naturally receive the two crowns instead of you."

The postilion took no time for reflection.

"I will go," said he.

"Very well," said Coster; "and since you have shown such willingness, here is one of the crowns in advance."

Five minutes later the carriage was harnessed and Coster was on his way to Vitré.

"Now," said Mademoiselle de Fargas, "as I have no part to play in all these preparations, I will ask your permission to take a little rest. I have not slept for five days and nights."

Cadoudal spread his cloak on the ground and on it five or six goatskins, a portmanteau served for a pillow, and Mademoiselle de Fargas began her first night's bivouac, and with it her apprenticeship to civil war.

As the clock of La Guerche was chiming ten, Cadoudal heard a voice at his ear which said: "Here I am."

It was Chante-en-Hiver, who had returned, as he had promised. He had gathered all the necessary information, and he told Cadoudal all that we already know. Goulin occupied the last house in the town of La Guerche. Twelve men, who slept in a room on the ground-floor, constituted his private guard. Four men took turns in acting as sentinels at the foot of the guillotine, relieving each other every two hours; the three off guard slept in the anteroom on the ground-floor of François Goulin's house. The horses which were used to pull the machine were stabled behind the same house.

At half-past ten, Branche-d'Or arrived in his turn; he had taken the uniforms from twenty dead hussars and brought them with him.

"Choose twenty men who can wear these clothes without looking as if they were masquerading in them. You will take command of them. I suppose you did as I told you, and found one uniform belonging to a quartermaster-general or a sub-

lieutenant?"

"Yes, general."

"You will put it on, and take the command of these twenty men. You will take the road to Château-Giron, so that you will reach La Guerche at the other end by the road opposite to it. When the sentinel challenges you, you will advance and say that you are come from General Hedouville at Rennes. You will ask for Colonel Hulot's house, which they will show you. You will be careful not to go there. Chante-en-Hiver, who will be your second in command, will show you the way through the town if you do not know it."

"I do know it, general," replied Branche-d'Or; "but no matter, a good fellow like Chante-en-Hiver is never in the way."

"You will go straight to Goulin's house. Thanks to your uniform, you will have no difficulty. While two men approach the sentinel and talk to him, the other eighteen will enter the house and seize the Blues who are there. You will make them swear not to offer any opposition at the sword's point. As soon as they have sworn, you need trouble no further about them; they will keep their oath. Masters below, you will then go up to François Goulin's room. As I have no idea that he will defend himself, I will not tell you what to do in case of resistance. As for the sentinel, you understand how important it is that he should not cry 'To arms!' He will surrender or you will kill him. In the meantime Chante-en-Hiver will take the horses from the stable and harness them to the machine; and as it is on the road, all you will have to do is to drive straight ahead in order to rejoin us. When once the Blues have given you their word, you can trust them with the secret of your mission. I am firmly convinced that there is not one among them who would court death for the sake of François Goulin, and that, on the contrary, you will find more than one who will give you good advice. Thus, for example, Chante-en-Hiver neglected to find out where the executioner lived, probably because I neglected to tell him to do so. I suppose none of you would care to fill his office, therefore he is indispensable to us. I leave the rest to your intelligence. We will make the attempt about three o'clock in the morning. At two o'clock we shall be where we were yesterday. A rocket will notify us that you have been successful."

Branche-d'Or and Chante-en-Hiver exchanged a few words in a low tone. One was objecting to something that the other was saying; finally they seemed to have come to some conclusion in the matter, and, turning to the general, they said: "That is enough, general. Everything shall be done as you say."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ROAD TO THE SCAFFOLD

About two o'clock the noise of a carriage was heard. It was Coster de Saint-Victor returning with the handbills. As he had been certain of the successful issue of the affair, he had ordered the printer to post a hundred in the town of Vitré.

The handbill read as follows:

You are invited to assist at the execution of François Goulin, commissioner-extraordinary of the Directory. He will be executed to-morrow at nine o'clock in the morning, on the road from Vitré to La Guerche, at a place called Moutiers, upon his own guillotine.

General Cadoudal, by whose order this execution takes place, offers the truce of God to all who shall be present at this act of justice.

GEORGES CADOU DAL.

From his camp at La Guerche.

In passing through Etreilles, Saint-Germain du Pinel and Moutiers, Coster had left copies with the inhabitants, whom he had awakened for the purpose, and whom he charged to inform their neighbors of the good fortune that was in store for them on the following day. Nor had any of these people complained of being awakened. A commissioner of the Republic is not executed every day.

Horses were harnessed to the trees that had been felled in that direction, as the Republicans had done at the other end of the ravine, in order to make the road passable.

At two o'clock, as had been agreed, Cadoudal gave the signal to his men, who took up their places behind the thickets where they had fought during the day.

Half an hour earlier Branche-d'Or, Chante-en-Hiver and his twenty men had started off on the road to Château-Giron, dressed as hussars. An hour passed in absolute silence. The Chouans could hear the sentinels calling from one to another from where they were posted.

About a quarter to three the disguised Chouans appeared at the end of the main street in La Guerche, and, after a moment's parley with the sentinel, were directed to the town-hall where Colonel Hulot was lodged. But Branche-d'Or and Chante-en-Hiver were not so simple as to follow the main thoroughfares of the town; they took to the lanes, where they might have been thought a patrol watching over the safety of the town.

They went thus to the house where François Goulin lodged. There everything passed off as Cadoudal had foreseen. The sentinel at the guillotine, seeing the little troop approach from the centre of the town, was not at all alarmed, and they had a pistol at his throat before he suspected that they had aught to say to him. The Republicans, taken by surprise in the house where they were asleep, made no resistance. François Goulin was caught in his bed, and had been rolled up and tied in his sheet before he had time to utter a single cry of alarm.

As for the executioner, he and his assistant were lodged in a little pavilion in the garden, and as Cadoudal had foretold, the Republicans themselves, when apprised of the object of the expedition, pointed out the hole where the two foul creatures were sleeping. The Blues promised furthermore to take and distribute the bills, and to ask Colonel Hulot's permission to be present at the execution.

A rocket went up from the hill at three o'clock in the morning, announcing to Cadoudal and his men that the expedition had been successfully terminated. And at the same time they caught the echo of the rumbling of a heavy cart which was conveying one of the finest specimens of Monsieur Guillotin's invention.

Seeing that his men were not pursued, Cadoudal called the Chouans, and they removed the dead bodies from the middle of the road, that the wagon might not be impeded in its progress. It was not until they were half-way down the hill that they heard the first blast of the trumpets and the first beats of the drums.

The fact is that no one had been in any haste to inform Colonel Hulot. The one who was charged with the duty did not forget to take with him a number of the handbills; and instead of first reporting the audacious deed which Cadoudal's men

had just perpetrated, he began by thrusting a handful of the bills under his eyes. Then, as they told the colonel nothing, he was forced to elicit the necessary information by a series of questions which brought forth the truth bit by bit. He finally heard it all, however, and flew into a terrible passion, ordering a hot pursuit of the Whites and the rescue of the Government commissioner at any cost.

Then the trumpets had sounded and the drums beat. But the officers wheedled their old colonel until they disarmed his anger, and obtained a tacit permission to go, at their own risk and peril, to see this execution which the colonel himself was dying to witness. But he knew that this was impossible, and that he would only jeopardize his own head by such an act; he therefore contented himself with telling his secretary, who had not dared to ask leave, to go with the other officers and bring him an exact report. The young man jumped for joy when he learned that he was to go and see François Goulin's head cut off.

The man must indeed have inspired profound disgust when Whites and Blues, citizens and soldiers, approved thus unanimously of an act which was open to such criticism from the standpoint of the right.

As for François Goulin, he had no very clear idea of what was impending over him until he saw the Chouans join and fraternize with his escort. Taken by men wearing the Republican uniform, rolled up and tied in his sheet before they had answered his questions, thrown into a carriage with the executioner, his dear friend, and following in the wake of his beloved machine, it will be readily understood how impossible it was that the truth should have dawned upon him.

But when he saw the pretended hussars exchanging jokes with the Chouans, who walked along the embankment at their side; when, after persistently asking what they intended to do with him, and why they had entered his domicile and laid violent hands upon his person, he was presented, by way of reply, with a placard announcing his own execution; then, indeed, did he realize the full gravity of his predicament, unless he were rescued by the Republicans, or his captors should be moved to pity, two chances so extremely problematical that he could place no dependence upon them.

His first idea was to address the executioner and impress upon him that he was to obey no one save himself, since he had been sent from Paris with the injunction to obey him in all things. But the man was himself so cast down, and looked around with such a haggard eye, being firmly convinced that he was to die in the same place and at the same hour with the man whose custom it was to put others to death, that the unhappy François Goulin soon saw that he had nothing to expect from that quarter.

Then he thought of crying out, appealing, entreating for help; but all the faces expressed such utter indifference that he shook his head and said to himself: "No, no, it is useless."

Thus they reached the foot of the hill. There the Chouans made a halt. They wished to take off their borrowed costumes and put on their own uniform, which consisted of the vest, breeches and gaiters of the Breton peasant. A number of curious people had already gathered there. The bills had accomplished wonders; from six and even eight miles in the country round, people were hastening to the spot. Everybody knew that this was the same François Goulin who had no other name throughout the Vendée and at Nantes than the Drowner.

The guillotine shared with him in their curiosity. The instrument was wholly unknown in this corner of France, which bordered upon Finistère (*finis terræ*, the end of the earth). Men and women questioned each other as to how it worked, where the condemned man was placed, and how the knife went up and down. People who did not know that Goulin was the hero of the occasion addressed him, asking for information. One of them said to him: "Do you believe a person dies as soon as his head is cut off? When I cut off the head of a goose or a duck it lives for more than a quarter of an hour afterward."

And Goulin, who was no more sure than he that death was instantaneous, writhed in his bonds and said to the executioner: "Did you not tell me one day that the heads of the people who had been guillotined gnawed at the bottom of your basket?"

But the executioner, stupefied with terror, either did not reply at all, or only mumbled such incoherent words as revealed the mortal fear which was upon him whose lips were thus clogged.

After a halt of a quarter of an hour, which gave the Chouans time to resume their own uniforms, they started again; but they caught sight of the entire population hastening from the left to witness the execution.

It was a curious thing to see these men, who, on the previous day, had been threatened with the fatal instrument, and who had looked with dread upon the man who had it in charge—it was a curious thing to see this instrument, like Diomedes' horses, which fed upon human flesh, cast itself upon its master and devour him in turn.

A black mass, preceded by a stick with a white handkerchief floating at the end, hurried through the crowd. They were the Republicans who had taken advantage of the truce of God which Cadoudal had offered them, and were coming, preceded by the white emblem of truce, to join the silence of scorn to the angry outbursts of the populace, who, having nothing at stake, respected nothing.

Cadoudal ordered a halt, and, after courteously saluting the Blues, with whom he and his men had exchanged death blows on the previous night, he said: "Come, gentlemen. The spectacle is a grand one and well worth the presence of men of all parties. Cut-throats, drowners, and assassins have no flag; or if they have one it is the standard of death—the black flag. Come, we will none of us march beneath that flag."

And he went on again, mingling with the Republicans, and trusting them as they trusted him.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE EXECUTION

An onlooker, watching the strange procession as it approached from the far side of Moutiers and slowly ascended the hill, would have found it difficult to make out the meaning of the strange jumble of men on foot and on horseback: Whites in the costume made sacred by Charette, Cathelineau and Cadoudal, Blues in the Republican uniform, accompanied by women, children and peasants, and rolling along in the midst of this human tide, restless as the waves of the ocean, an unknown machine—unless the spectator had seen one of Coster de Saint-Victor's placards.

But these placards were for the time being considered merely as one of those gasconades which the parties permitted themselves at this period; and many persons had come from afar, not to see the promised execution—that would have been too much to expect—but to learn the explanation of the promise which had been made them.

Moutiers was the appointed meeting place, and all the peasants in the neighborhood had been waiting in the public square of that town since eight o'clock in the morning.

Suddenly they were told that the procession, which was growing with every step, was approaching the town. Every one at once hastened to the spot indicated; and there they could see the Vendéan chiefs, who formed the advance-guard, half-way up the hill. In their hands they were carrying green branches, as in the old days of expiation.

The crowd which had gathered at Moutiers streamed along the road; and, like two rivers meeting, the two human floods surged against each other and mingled their waters.

There was a moment of confusion and tumult. Every one fought to get near the cart which carried the scaffold and the carriage which contained Goulin, the executioner and his assistant. But as they were all animated by the same desire, and as enthusiasm was perhaps greater than curiosity, those who had caught a glimpse thought it only right to fall back and give the others a chance to have an equal opportunity.

As they advanced, Goulin grew paler and paler; for he realized that they were making straight for a goal which they would surely reach. Moreover, he had seen, on the bill which had been thrust into his hands, that Moutiers was to be the scene of his execution; and he knew only too well that the town they were approaching at every step was Moutiers. He rolled his eyes around the crowd, unable to fathom this mingling of Chouans and Republicans, who on the previous evening were waging such furious warfare and yet in the morning united in such friendly fashion to form his escort. From time to time he closed his eyes, doubtless in the vain hope of persuading himself that it was all a dream. But then the tempestuous roaring of the crowd and the swaying of the carriage must have carried with it the suggestion of a tempest at sea. Then he raised his arms, which he had succeeded in freeing from their shroud-like wrappings, beat the air like a crazy man, stood up, tried to cry out, and perhaps did cry out; but his voice was lost in the tumult, and he fell back again on the seat between his two gloomy companions. At last they reached the plateau of Moutiers, and then there came a cry of "Halt!"

They had reached their destination.

More than ten thousand persons were assembled on this plateau. The nearest houses in the village were crowded with spectators and the trees along the roadside were loaded with human freight. A few men on horseback, and a woman with her arm in a sling, towered above the crowd.

The men were Cadoudal, Coster de Saint-Victor, and the Chouan leaders. The woman was Mademoiselle de Fargas, who, to familiarize herself with her future emotions upon the field of battle, had come in quest of the most intense of all emotions—that which is experienced by those who witness a death upon the scaffold.

When the procession had halted, and each person had placed himself as he or she wished to be placed during the execution, Cadoudal raised his hand in token that he wished to speak.

Every voice was hushed, and even the breath seemed to expire upon pale lips. A mournful silence ensued, and Goulin's eyes were fastened upon Cadoudal, of whose name and importance he was ignorant. He had none the less distinguished him from the others as perhaps the man whom he had come from afar to seek—the man who at their first meeting was to change rôles with him, to make of himself the judge and executioner, and of the judge and executioner proper the victim—if an assassin can be described as a victim, no matter what manner of death was reserved for him. Cadoudal, as we have said, had signified that he wished to speak.

"Citizens," said he, addressing the Republicans, "as you see, I give you the title which you give yourselves—my brothers," he continued, addressing the Chouans—"and I give you the name with which God receives you in his bosom—your meeting here at Moutiers to-day, and its object, prove that each of you is convinced of the guilt of this man, who is deserving of the death which he is about to suffer. And yet, Republicans, whom I hope some day to call brothers, you do not know this man as we do.

"One day, in 1793, my father and I were carrying some flour to Nantes. There was a famine in the town. It was scarcely light. Carrier, the infamous Carrier, had not yet arrived at Nantes. Therefore we must render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto Goulin the things which are Goulin's. It was Goulin who invented the drownings.

"My father and I were going along the Quai de la Loire. We saw a boat on which they were loading priests. A man was driving them into it two by two, and counting them as they went aboard. He counted ninety-seven of these priests, who were bound in couples. As they entered the boat they disappeared, for they were thrown into the hold. The boat left the shore and floated out into the middle of the Loire. This man stood in front with an oar.

"My father stopped his horse and said to me: 'Wait and watch, something infamous is about to happen here.'

"And in fact the boat had a plug. When the boat reached the middle of the stream, the unfortunates in the hold were thrown into the water. As they came up to the surface, this man and his wretched companions struck at these heads, which already wore the halo of martyrdom, and bruised them with their oars. It was that man there who urged them on to the terrible work. Two of the condemned men, however, were too far away to be struck; they made their way toward the bank, for they had found a sandbar which afforded them a foothold.

"'Quick,' said my father, 'let us save those two.'

"We sprang from our horses and slipped down the bank of the Loire with our knives in our hands. They, thinking that we also were murderers, tried to escape from us. But we cried out to them: 'Come to us, men of God! these knives are to cut your bonds, not to strike you.'

"They came to us, and in an instant their hands were free, and we were on horseback, with them behind us, galloping away. They were the worthy Abbés Briançon and Lacombe.

"They both took refuge with us in the forests of the Morbihan. One of them died of cold, hunger and fatigue, as so many of us have died. That was the Abbé Briançon.

"The other," said Cadoudal, pointing to a priest who tried to conceal himself among the crowd, "recovered, and to-day serves God with his prayers, as we serve him with our arms. That other is the Abbé Lacombe. There he is!

"From that time," he continued, pointing to Goulin, "this man, and always the same, presided at the drownings. In all the slaughter which took place at Nantes, he was Carrier's right arm. When Carrier was tried and condemned, François Goulin was tried at the same time; but he posed before the tribunal as an instrument who had been unable to refuse to obey the orders that were given him. I possess a letter written entirely by his hand."

Here Cadoudal drew a paper from his pocket.

"I wanted to send it to the tribunal to enlighten its conscience. This letter, written to his worthy colleague Perdraux, was his condemnation, since in it he described his mode of procedure. Listen, you men of hard-fought battles, and tell me if ever a war-bulletin made you shudder like this."

And amid solemn silence, Cadoudal read aloud the following letter:

CITIZEN—In the exaltation of your patriotism, you ask me how I make my Republican marriages.

When I get ready for the baths, I strip the men and women, and go through their clothing to see if they have any money or jewelry. I put the clothing in a great hamper, then I tie the man and woman together, face to face, by the wrists. I bring them to the banks of the Loire; they go aboard my boat, two by two, and two men push them from behind and throw them into the water, head first; then when they try to save themselves we have great clubs with which we beat them back.

That is what we call the civil marriage.

FRANÇOIS GOULIN.

"Do you know," continued Cadoudal, "what prevented me from sending that letter? It was the intercession of the good Abbé Lacombe. He said to me: 'If God has given this man a chance to escape, it is that he may have an opportunity to repent.'"

"Now, has he repented? You see him. After having drowned more than fifteen hundred persons, he seizes the moment when the terror has been revived to ask the favor of returning to this same region where he was executioner, in order to make fresh executions. If he had repented, I also would have pardoned him; but since, like the dog in the Bible, he returns to his own vomit, since God has permitted him to fall into my hands after escaping those of the revolutionary tribunal, it is because God wishes him to die."

A moment of silence followed Cadoudal's words. Then the condemned man rose in his carriage, and cried in a stifled voice: "Mercy! mercy!"

"Well," said Cadoudal, rising in his stirrups, "so be it. Since you are standing there, look around you. There are ten thousand men who have come to see you die. If, among them, a single one asks for mercy, you shall have it."

"Mercy!" cried Lacombe, stretching out his arms.

Cadoudal rose again in his stirrups.

"You alone, father, of us all, have no right to ask for mercy for this man. You extended mercy to him on the day when you prevented me from sending his letter to the revolutionary tribunal. You may help him to die, but that is all that I can grant you."

Then in a voice which made itself heard by all the spectators, he asked for the second time: "Is there one among you who asks for mercy for this man?"

Not a voice replied.

"You have five minutes in which to make your peace with God," said Cadoudal to François Goulin; "and, unless it be a miracle from heaven, nothing can save you. Father," said he, addressing Lacombe, "you may give this man your arm, and accompany him to the scaffold." Then, to the executioner, he said, "Do your duty!"

The executioner, who now saw that his only part in the performance would be the execution of his ordinary functions, rose and put his hand on Groulin's shoulder in token that he belonged to him.

The Abbé Lacombe approached the condemned man, but the latter pushed him back.

Then ensued a frightful struggle between the man who would neither pray nor die and his two executioners. In spite of his cries, his bites and his blasphemies, the executioner picked him up in his arms as if he had been a child; and, while the assistant prepared the knife, he carried him from his carriage to the platform of the guillotine.

The Abbé Lacombe went up first, with a ray of hope, and waited for the culprit; but his efforts were vain, for Goulin would not even put his lips to the crucifix.

Then on this awful stage there occurred a scene which is beyond description. The executioner and his assistant succeeded in stretching the condemned man upon the fatal plank. It rocked. Then the onlookers saw a flash as of lightning. It was the knife which fell. Then a dull thud. It was the head which had fallen.

A deep silence followed, and in its midst Cadoudal's voice could be heard, saying: "God's justice is done!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SEVENTH FRUCTIDOR

Let us leave Cadoudal to continue his desperate struggles against the Republicans, victor and vanquished by turns, and, with Pichegru—the last remaining hope of the Bourbons—let us cast an eye upon Paris, and pause before the pile erected by Marie de Medicis, where the citizen-directors still abide in the respective apartments we have mentioned.

Barras had received Bonaparte's message, with which Augereau was charged.

On the eve of the latter's departure, the young commander-in-chief, choosing the anniversary of the 14th of July, which corresponded to the 26th Messidor, had assembled the army for a celebration, and had had addresses drawn up in which the soldiers of the Army of Italy protested their attachment to the Republic and their willingness to die for it if necessary.

On the grand square at Milan a pyramid had been erected and surrounded by trophies taken from the enemy, that is to say, the flags and cannon. This pyramid bore the names of all the officers and soldiers who had died during the campaign in Italy.

Every Frenchman in Milan was urged to be present at this celebration, and more than twenty thousand men presented arms to the glorious trophies and the pyramid covered with the immortal names of the dead.

While these twenty thousand men formed in square and presented arms to their brothers, who lay stretched upon the battlefields of Arcola, Castiglione, and Rivoli, Bonaparte, with uncovered head, said, as he pointed to the pyramid:

"Soldiers! to-day is the anniversary of the 14th of July. You see before you, on the pyramid, the names of those soldiers who have died on the field of honor for the cause of liberty. They have set you an example. You belong absolutely to the Republic. The happiness of thirty millions of Frenchmen is in your hands, and to your hands is also intrusted the glory of that name which has received new lustre from your victories.

"Soldiers! I know that you are deeply grieved by the evils which threaten your country; but that country cannot be in real danger. The same men who are responsible for its triumph over allied Europe are still there. Mountains separate us from France. You would cross them with the speed of an eagle if it were necessary, in order to protect the safety of the Constitution, defend liberty and Republicanism.

"Soldiers! the government watches over the trust which has been confided to it. The royalists, as soon as they appear, will forfeit their lives. Have no fear; but swear by the spirits of the heroes who have died beside us for liberty, swear by our flags implacable war against the enemies of the Republic and the Constitution of the Year III."

Then there followed a banquet, and toasts were offered. Bonaparte gave the first.

"To the brave Stengel, La Harpe, and Dubois, who died on the field of honor! May their shades watch over us and preserve us from the snares of our enemies!"

Masséna proposed a toast to the re-emigration of the emigrés.

Augereau, who was to start the next day with full authority from Bonaparte, raised his glass and said:

"To the union of all French Republicans! To the destruction of the Clichy Club! Let the conspirators tremble! From the Adige and the Rhine to the Seine is but a step. Let them tremble! Their iniquities are known, and the price is at the end of our bayonets!"

As he uttered the last words, trumpets and drums sounded the charge. Each soldier sprang to his gun, as if he were obliged to start on the instant; and the men could scarcely be induced to resume their places at the tables.

The members of the Directory received Bonaparte's message with widely varying emotions.

Augereau exactly suited Barras, who, always ready to mount his horse and summon the Jacobins and the people of the faubourgs to his assistance, considered him the man for the situation. Rewbell and La Reveillière, whose characters were cool and evenly balanced, wanted a general who was as cool and as evenly balanced as themselves. As for Carnot and Barthélemy, it is needless to say that Augereau could in no wise accord with their plans.

Indeed, Augereau, such as we know him, was a dangerous auxiliary. A brave man, an excellent soldier, with an intrepid

heart, but a boasting Gascon tongue, Augereau revealed too clearly the object of his mission. But Rewbell and Le Reveillière succeeded in taking him aside and convincing him that it was necessary to save the Republic by an energetic and decisive blow, but without bloodshed. In order to keep him quiet, they gave him command of the seventeenth military division, which included Paris.

This was the 16th Fructidor.

The relations between the two parties were so strained that a *coup d'état* was expected at every moment, either on the part of the directors or the councils.

Pichegru was the natural chief of the royalist movement; if he were to take the initiative, the royalists would gather round him.

This book which we are writing is far from being a romance—perhaps, indeed, it is not enough of a romance to suit some of our readers; but we have already said that it was written along the shores of history from promontory to promontory. And just as we were the first to throw broad daylight upon the events of the 13th Vendémiaire and the part which Bonaparte played in it, so shall we, at this period which we have reached, show the over-calumniated Pichegru in his true light.

Pichegru, after his refusal to listen to the Prince de Condé—a refusal the causes of which we have already narrated—entered into direct negotiations with the Comte de Provence, who, since the death of the Dauphin, had assumed the title of King Louis XVIII.

Now, when Louis XVIII. sent Cadoudal his commission as *king's lieutenant*, and the red ribbon, he sent Pichegru at the same time (to show his appreciation of his disinterestedness, in that he had refused to accept honors and money, and would not attempt to bring about the restoration save for the glory of being a second Monk without the Duchy of Albemarle) the following letter:

I have long desired to express to you, sir, the feelings which you early awakened in me and the esteem which I have for your person. I yield now to the imperious demands of my heart when I say to you that for the last eighteen months it has seemed to me that the honor of restoring the French monarchy was reserved for you.

I will not speak to you of the admiration which I feel for your talents and for the noble deeds which you have performed. History has already placed you in the ranks of the great generals, and posterity will confirm the verdict of all Europe in regard to your victories and your virtues.

The most distinguished leaders have, for the most part, owed their victories to long experience in their professions; but from the first you were what you have never ceased to be throughout all your campaigns. You have united the bravery of Marshal Saxe to the disinterestedness of Monsieur de Turenne and the modesty of Monsieur de Catinat. And I may say that your name is indissolubly associated in my mind with those names which have made our annals great and glorious.

I confirm, sir, the full powers which M. de Condé bestowed upon you. I put no limit upon them, and leave you entirely free to do anything you may think necessary for my service which is compatible with the dignity of my crown and in accord with the interests of the kingdom.

You know, sir, what are my sentiments toward you. They will never change.

LOUIS.

A second letter followed the first. The two together furnish an exact measure of Louis XVIII.'s feelings toward Pichegru, and should influence not only his contemporaries but posterity as well.

You are aware, sir, of the unfortunate events which have taken place in Italy. The necessity of sending thirty thousand men there has forced an indefinite postponement of the project of crossing the Rhine. Your attachment to me will enable you readily to understand my chagrin at this unfortunate adverse stroke of Fate, especially just as I saw the gates of my kingdom opening before me. On the other hand, these disasters increase, if that were possible, the respect and confidence with which you have inspired me. I am sure that you will re-establish the French monarchy; and whether the war continues, or whether we have peace this summer, I count upon you for the success of the great work. I place in your hands, sir, absolute power to act for me and in my name. Make such use of it as you think necessary for my service.

If the valuable sources of information which you have at your command in Paris and the provinces; if your talents, and, above all, your character, could permit me to fear an event which might oblige you to leave the kingdom, you would find your place between Monsieur de Condé and myself. In speaking thus to you, I have a heartfelt desire to prove to you my esteem and attachment.

LOUIS.

Therefore, on the one hand, Augereau was urging matters to a climax with letters from Bonaparte; and, on the other, Pichegru was being urged to action with letters from Louis XVIII.

The news that Augereau had been given command of the seventeenth military division—that is to say, that he had been placed at the head of the forces in Paris—impressed the royalists with the fact that they had no time to lose. Therefore, Pichegru, Barbé-Marbois, Dumas, Murinais, Delarue, Rovère, Aubry, Laffon-Ladébat—the whole royalist party, in short, assembled at Adjutant-General Ramel's house, the latter being commander of the guard of the Corps Legislatif.

This Ramel was a brave soldier, and had been adjutant-general of the Army of the Rhine under the orders of General Desaix, when, in January, 1797, he had received orders from the Directory to return to Paris and take command of the guard of the Corps Legislatif. This corps was composed of a battalion of six hundred men, most of whom had been selected from the grenadiers of the Convention, whom we saw marching so bravely to the charge, under the command of Bonaparte, on the 13th Vendémiaire.

At this meeting Pichegru clearly explained the situation. Ramel sided entirely with the two councils, and was ready to obey any orders which the two presidents might give him. Pichegru proposed that they should take command that very evening of two hundred men and arrest Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillère, and make charges against them the next day. Unfortunately, they had agreed to abide by the decision of the majority. The temporizers opposed Pichegru's motion.

"The Constitution will be all-sufficient to defend us," said Lacuée.

"The Constitution can do nothing against cannon; and they will reply to your decrees with cannon," replied Villot.

"The soldiers will not be with them," persisted Lacuée.

"The soldiers will follow those who command them," said Pichegru. "You will not decide, and you will be lost. As for me," he continued, sadly, "I sacrificed my life long ago. I am tired of all these discussions which come to naught. When you need me you can come for me."

And with these words he went away. At the very moment when Pichegru left Ramel's house, sad and depressed, a post-chaise drew up before the Luxembourg, and citizen-general Moreau was announced to Barras.

CHAPTER XXIX

JEAN-VICTOR MOREAU

Moreau was about this time a man thirty-seven years of age, and, with Hoche, the only man who could dispute with Bonaparte—in reputation at least, if not in fortune.

He had at this time just joined an association, which later became a conspiracy, which lasted from 1797 to 1809, when it became extinct at the death of General Oudot, the head of the society, which was called the Philadelphes. In this society he was known as Fabius, in memory of the famous Roman general who conquered Hannibal by temporizing.

Therefore Moreau was known as the Temporizer.

Unfortunately, temporizing was not with him the result of calculation nor the effect of character. Moreau was absolutely lacking in firmness in politics and strength of will. Had he been gifted with more instinctive force, he might have had a greater influence upon events in France, and have traced out for himself a career comparable with the most glorious careers of modern or ancient times.

Moreau was born at Morlaix in Brittany. His father was a distinguished lawyer. His family was of high standing, and rich rather than poor. At eighteen years of age, being attracted toward the military profession, he enlisted. His father, who wished him to become a lawyer like himself, bought young Moreau's discharge, and sent him to Rennes to study law. He soon acquired considerable influence over his companions, which was undoubtedly due to his moral superiority. Inferior in intellect to Bonaparte, and inferior in rapidity of thought to Hoche, he was nevertheless superior to most men.

When the troubles which were the precursors of the Revolution burst out in Brittany, Moreau sided with the parliament against the court, and carried with him the whole body of students. Then followed between Moreau, who was thenceforth called the parliamentary general, and the commandant of Rennes a struggle in which the old soldier did not always have the advantage. The commandant at Rennes finally gave orders for Moreau's arrest.

But Moreau, who possessed as a part of his genius the quality of prudence, found means to evade the search, showing himself every day, now at one point, now at another, so that the people should be convinced that the spirit of parliamentary opposition had not departed from the old capital of America.

But later, seeing that this parliament which he was defending opposed the convocation of the States-General, and considering that such a convocation was necessary for the future welfare of France, he changed sides, while still holding the same opinions, supported the convocation of the States-General, and appeared at the head of all the mobs which were thereafter organized in Brittany. He was president of the Breton youths gathered at Pontivy when the procureur-general, desiring to utilize the talents which he was revealing, made him commander of the first brigade of volunteers from Ille-et-Vilaine.

Here is what Moreau says of himself:

I was destined to the study of the law at the beginning of this revolution which was to burst the bonds of the French people. It changed the whole course of my life; I devoted it to the profession of arms. I did not take my place among the soldiers of liberty through ambition, but I entered upon a military career out of respect for the rights of the nation: I became a warrior because I was a citizen.

To his calm and slightly lymphatic nature, Moreau owed a sure insight in times of danger and a coolness which were astonishing in so young a man. Men were still lacking at this time, although they were soon to swarm forward in crowds. His qualities, though of a negative order, procured for Moreau the rank of brigadier-general in the army of which Pichegru was then commander-in-chief. Pichegru, the man of genius, appreciated Moreau, the man of talent, and conferred on him, in 1794, the rank of general of division. From that time he had command of twenty-five thousand men, and was most frequently intrusted with the conduct of siege operations. In the brilliant campaign of 1794, which subdued Holland, Moreau commanded the right wing of the army. The conquest of Holland had been deemed impossible by all strategists, Holland being, as is well known, a land that lies lower than the sea, which was wrested from the seas, and which can be flooded at will.

The Hollanders risked this semi-suicide. They pierced the dikes which held back the seas, and thought to escape

invasion by inundating their country. But cold weather fell suddenly, of a severity unknown in the country, in which the mercury fell to fifteen degrees, and which had not been seen there more than once in a century, and froze the canals and the rivers.

Then, with a daring which is peculiar to them, the French ventured out upon the deep. The infantry risked the passage first, then the cavalry, and, finally, the light artillery. Seeing that the ice bore this unaccustomed weight bravely, they ventured upon it with the heavy pieces of field-artillery. They fought on ice as they were in the habit of fighting on dry land. The English were attacked and driven back with the bayonet. The Austrian batteries were captured. That which should have saved Holland was its destruction. The cold which later became the mortal enemy of the Empire was now the faithful ally of the Republic.

After this there was nothing further to hinder the invasion of the United Provinces. The ramparts could no longer defend the town, for they were on a level with the ice. Arnheim, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague were taken. The conquest of Over-Yssel, Gröningen and Friesland finished the subjugation of Holland.

There remained the Stadtholder's fleet, which was frozen in the ice of the Straits of Texel, the different vessels of which were near the margin of the water. Moreau brought his cannon to bear upon the artillery of the fleet. He fought the vessels as he would have attacked a fortress, sending a regiment of hussars to board it; and the fleet was captured by a regiment of artillery and light cavalry—a thing unheard-of in the annals of nations or in naval history.

These were the achievements which had caused Pichegru and Moreau to grow in stature; but Moreau remained merely the clever lieutenant of the man of genius.

Meanwhile, Pichegru was given the command of the Army of the Moselle and the Rhine, and Moreau that of the Army of the North.

Before long, as we have said, Pichegru fell under suspicion and was recalled to Paris, and Moreau succeeded to his command of the Army of the Rhine and the Moselle.

At the beginning of the campaign, some skirmishers captured a wagon which formed part of the equipage of the Austrian General Klinglin. In a little chest which was forwarded to Moreau, the latter discovered the whole correspondence between Fauche-Borel and the Prince de Condé. This correspondence gave a full and detailed account of the relations which had obtained between Fauche-Borel and Pichegru when the former had posed as a travelling wine-merchant.

In this matter every one is free to judge Moreau according to his own way of thinking and his own conscience.

Ought Moreau—the friend, the debtor, the lieutenant of Pichegru—simply to have examined the contents of the chest and then have sent it to his former chief, with the simple recommendation "Take care!" or ought he, putting his country before his affections, the Stoic before the friend, to have done what he did; that is to say, spend six months in deciphering, or having deciphered, all the letters which were in cipher, and then, with his suspicions verified, but with Pichegru's guilt unproved, take advantage of the preliminaries of the treaty of Léoben, and when the tempest was ready to burst over Pichegru's head, go to Barras and say: "Behold me, I am the thunderbolt!"

Now that was what Moreau had come to say to Barras. Just such proofs as these, not of complicity, but of negotiations, were what the Directory needed to accuse Pichegru, and these proofs Moreau supplied.

Barras was closeted alone with Moreau for two hours, satisfying himself that he held weapons that were the more deadly because they were poisoned. Then, when convinced that there were grounds, if not for condemnation, at least for trial, he rang. An usher entered.

"Go," said Barras, "bid the minister of police, and my two colleagues, Rewbell and La Reveillère come hither." Then, looking at his watch, he said: "Ten o'clock of the evening; we still have six hours before us. Citizen-general, you have come in time." Then holding out his hand to Moreau, he added, with his inscrutable smile: "We will reward you for this."

Moreau asked permission to withdraw and it was granted. He would have embarrassed Barras quite as much as Barras would have embarrassed him.

The three directors remained in consultation until three o'clock in the morning. The commissioner of police joined them at once, and they sent him for Merlin (of Douai) and Augereau, one after the other. Then about three o'clock in the morning they sent an address to the government printer which was couched in the following terms:

The Directory, attacked about two o'clock in the morning by the troops of the two councils under General Ramel, was obliged to meet force with force.

After about an hour's fighting, the troops of the two councils were defeated, and the government remained victorious.

More than a hundred prisoners remained in the hands of the directors; to-morrow a list of their names will be given, together with a more ample list of their conspiracies, which have almost succeeded in overturning the established power.

18th Fructidor, four A.M.

This curious production was signed by Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillière-Lepaux. Sothin, the minister of police, had suggested it and had drawn it up.

"They will not believe in your placard," said Barras, shrugging his shoulders.

"They will believe in it to-morrow," replied Sothin, "and that is all we need. It does not matter what they believe the day after; the trick will be turned then."

The directors separated, giving orders to arrest first of all their two colleagues, Carnot and Barthélemy.

CHAPTER XXX

THE EIGHTEENTH FRUCTIDOR

While Sothin, the minister of police, was drawing up his placards, and proposing to have Carnot and forty-two deputies shot—while the directors were annulling the appointment of Barthélemy, the fifth director, and promising his place to Augereau if they had reason to be satisfied with him when the evening of the next day arrived—two men were quietly playing backgammon in a corner of the Luxembourg.

One of these two men, the younger by two years only, had begun as an officer of engineers, and had published mathematical essays which had won him admittance into several societies of learning. He had also composed a eulogy on Vauban which had been crowned by the Academy of Dijon.

At the dawn of the Revolution he was a captain of engineers, and had been appointed Chevalier of Saint-Louis. In 1791 the department of the Pas-de-Calais had elected him deputy to the Legislative Assembly. His first speech there had been directed against the emigré princes at Coblenz, against the Marquis de Mirabeau, against Cardinal de Rohan, and against Monsieur de Calonne, who was intriguing with foreign kings to induce them to declare war upon France. He proposed that non-commissioned officers and sergeants should take the place of the officers belonging to the nobility who had emigrated. In 1792, he asked for the demolition of all the bastilles in the interior of France, and presented measures to abolish the passive obedience which had formerly been exacted from officers and soldiers.

In the days when the Revolution had been threatened by foreign powers, he had asked to have three hundred thousand pikes manufactured to arm the people of Paris. Elected a deputy to the National Assembly, he had unhesitatingly voted the death of the king. He had furthered the acquirement of the principality of Monaco and a part of Belgium by France.

Sent to the Army of the North in 1793, he had degraded General Gratien from his rank upon the field of battle, because he fell back before the enemy, and placing himself at the head of the French column, he won back the ground that had been lost.

In the month of August of the same year he had been chosen a member of the Committee of Public Safety, and, in that position, displayed an extraordinary talent which has become proverbial, by organizing fourteen armies and formulating plans of campaign, not only for each army by itself, but for operations including them all. It was at that time that the French armies won that astonishing series of victories, from the recovery of Toulon to the surrender of the four strongholds in the North.

This man was Lazare-Nicholas-Marguerite Carnot, the fourth director, who, not having been able to agree with Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillière-Lepaux, had just been condemned to death by them, being thought too dangerous to be allowed to live. His partner, who was shaking the dice with a nonchalance equal to Carnot's energy, was the Marquis François Barthélemy, the last of the directors to be appointed, who had no other merit than that of being the nephew of the Abbé Barthélemy, the author of the "Voyage du jeune Anarcharsis."

As minister from France to Switzerland during the Revolution, he had concluded at Basel two years before the time of which we are now speaking, the treaties of peace with Prussia and Spain, which had put an end to the first coalition. He had been chosen because of the well-known moderation of his opinions; and it was this very moderation which had justly led to his dismissal by his colleagues, and was later to lead to his incarceration.

It was one o'clock when Carnot, by a brilliant play, ended the sixth game of backgammon. The two friends shook hands at parting.

"Au revoir," said Carnot to Barthélemy.

"Au revoir," replied Barthélemy. "Are you sure, my dear colleague? In these times I am never sure when I leave a friend at night that I shall meet him again in the morning."

"What the deuce do you fear?" asked Carnot.

"Hum!" said Barthélemy, "a stroke of the dagger is soon given."

"Nonsense!" said Carnot, "you need not worry about that. You are too goodnatured for them to think of fearing you. They will treat you as one of the do-nothing kings; you will be shaved and shut up in a cloister."

"But then, if you fear that," said Barthélemy, "why do you prefer defeat to victory? For, after the propositions which have been made us, it depends solely on ourselves whether we overthrow our three colleagues or not."

"My dear friend," said Carnot, "you cannot see beyond your nose, which is unfortunately not as long as that of your uncle. Who are the men who have made us these propositions? The royalists. Now do you think the royalists would ever pardon me for the part I have taken against them? It is only a choice of deaths; with the royalists I shall be hanged as a regicide, with the directors I shall be assassinated as a royalist. I would rather be assassinated."

"And with these ideas you can go willingly to bed in your own rooms?" said Barthélemy.

"Where should I go to bed?"

"In some place, no matter where, where you would be safe."

"I am a fatalist; if the dagger is to strike me, it will find me. Good-night, Barthélemy! My conscience is clear; I voted the death of the king, but I saved France. It is for France to take care of me."

And Carnot went to bed as composedly as he always did.

He was not mistaken. A German had received the order to arrest him, and, if he made the least resistance, to assassinate him. At three o'clock in the morning the German and his satellites presented themselves at the door of Carnot's apartments, which he shared with a younger brother.

Carnot's servant, when he saw the men, and heard their leader ask in bad French where citizen Carnot was, took them to his brother, and he, having nothing to fear for himself, left them in error at first.

Then the valet ran to warn his master that they had come to arrest him. Carnot, almost naked, escaped through one of the gates of the Luxembourg garden to which he had the key. Then the servant came back. The brother, when he saw him, knew that the other had escaped, and he made himself known. The soldiers in a rage ran through the apartment, but they found only Carnot's empty bed, which was still warm.

Once in the garden of the Luxembourg, the fugitive paused, not knowing where to go. He finally went to a lodging-house in the Rue de l'Enfer, but was told that there was not a vacant room in the house. He set off again, seeking shelter at random, when suddenly the alarm-guns went off. At the sound several doors and windows were opened. What would become of him, half naked as he was? He would certainly be arrested by the first patrol, and troops were marching toward the Luxembourg from all directions.

While he was deliberating, a patrol appeared at the corner of the Rue de la Vieille-Comédie. A porter half-opened his door and Carnot sprang inside. Chance willed that the porter should be a worthy man who kept him concealed until he had time to prepare another hiding-place.

As for Barthélemy, although Barras had twice sent him warning during the day of the fate that awaited him, he took no precautions. He was arrested in his bed an hour after he had left Carnot. He made no resistance, and did not even ask to see the warrant, and the words "Oh, my country!" were the only ones he uttered.

His servant, Letellier, who had been with him for twenty years, asked to be arrested with him. This singular favor was refused. We shall see how he obtained it later.

The two councils named a committee which was to sit permanently. The president of the committee was named Siméon. He had not yet arrived when the alarm-guns sounded.

Pichegru had passed the night with this committee, together with those of the conspiracy who were determined to meet force with force; but none thought the moment when the Directory would dare attempt its *coup d'état* was so near at hand. Several members of the committee were armed, among them Rovère and Villot, who, learning suddenly that they were surrounded, volunteered to go out, pistol in hand. But this Pichegru opposed.

"Our other colleagues assembled here are not armed," he said; "they would be massacred by those wretches, who are only waiting for an opportunity. Do not let us desert them."

Just then the door of the room occupied by the committee opened and a member of the councils, named Delarue, rushed in.

"Ah, my dear Delarue!" exclaimed Pichegru, "what on earth have you come for? We are all going to be arrested."

"Very well; then we will be arrested together," answered Delarue, calmly.

And indeed, in order that he might share the same fate as his comrades, Delarue had had the courage to force his way three times past the guard in order to reach the committee room. He had been warned at his own house of the danger he ran, but he had refused to escape, although it would have been easy for him; and, having kissed his wife and children without waking them, he had come, as we have seen, to join his colleagues.

We have said in a preceding chapter that Pichegru, when he had offered to bring the directors bound to the bar of the Corps Legislatif, if they would give him two hundred men, had not been able to obtain them. They were now eager to defend themselves, but it was too late.

Delarue had scarcely exchanged these few words with Pichegru when the door was burst open, and a crowd of soldiers, led by Augereau, entered. Augereau, finding himself near Pichegru, put out his hand to seize him. Delarue drew a pistol from his pocket, and attempted to fire upon Augereau, but on the instant a bayonet was thrust through his arm.

"I arrest you!" cried Augereau, seizing Pichegru.

"Wretch!" exclaimed the latter, "all you needed was to become a minion of Barras."

"Soldiers," cried a member of the committee, "will you dare lay hands upon Pichegru, your general?"

Without a word, Augereau flung himself upon him, and, with the assistance of four soldiers, succeeded, after a violent struggle, in securing his arms and binding them behind his back.

With Pichegru arrested, the conspiracy had no longer a head, and no one attempted further resistance.

General Mathieu Dumas, the same man who was Minister of War at Naples under Joseph Bonaparte, and has left such interesting memoirs, was with the committee when it was surrounded. He wore the uniform of a general. He left through the door by which Augereau had entered and went downstairs.

In the vestibule he was confronted by a soldier, who thrust a bayonet in his face and said, "No one is allowed to go out."

"I know it," said he, "for it was I who just gave the order."

"I beg your pardon, general," said the soldier, lowering his weapon.

And the general passed out without further hinderance. He was obliged to leave Paris in order to insure his safety.

Mathieu Dumas summoned his two aides-de-camp, ordered them to mount their horses, galloped to the barrier, gave his orders to the guard, and passed outside the walls, to go, as he said, to another post, and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TEMPLE

This is what had happened.

When a great event takes place like the 13th Vendémiaire, or the 18th Fructidor, it stamps an indelible date upon the book of history. Everybody knows this date; and so when the words "13th Vendémiaire" or "18th Fructidor" are pronounced, everybody knows the results which followed the great events commemorated by these dates, but very few know the secret springs which prepared the way for the accomplishment of these events.

As a result, we have particularly assumed the duty in our historical novels, or romanticized histories, of telling things which no one has told before, and of relating matters which we know, but of which very few persons share that knowledge with us.

Since friendly indiscretion has revealed the source from which we have obtained the priceless volumes and original and rare manuscripts from which we have drawn, this is the proper place for us to acknowledge our indebtedness for the communication of these interesting volumes which it is so hard to coax down from their shelves. They have been for us the beacon which has guided us through the 13th Vendémiaire; and we have only to light it again to penetrate the mazes of the 18th Fructidor.

It is, then, with the certainty of telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that we repeat the phrase with which this chapter begins: This is what had happened.

On the evening of the 17th, Adjutant-general Ramel, after he had visited his posts, went to take his orders from the committee, who were to remain in session during the night. He was present when Pichegru, as we have said, having been prevented by his colleagues from taking the initiative, had predicted what would happen, and with his habitual indifference, although he might have fled, and thus have escaped the persecution which he had foreseen, had allowed himself to drift along with the current of his destiny.

When Pichegru had gone, the other deputies became more firmly convinced that the Directory would not dare to attempt anything against them, and if they did, it would not fall at once, and that therefore for several days they were safe. Even before his departure, Pichegru heard several of the deputies, among them Eméry, Mathieu Dumas, Vaublanc, Tronçon de Coudray and Thibaudeau, indignantly denounce this supposition, and decry the terror with which it had inspired the public.

Adjutant-general Ramel was therefore dismissed without further orders; he was merely instructed to do that day what he had done the day before, and what he would do on the morrow. Consequently he returned to his quarters and contented himself with ascertaining that, in case of alarm, his grenadiers were ready to take up arms. Two hours later, at one in the morning, he received orders from the minister of war to report to him.

He hastened to the hall, which was empty save for one solitary inspector, named Rovère, who was asleep. He told him of the order which he had received, and begged him to note its importance at that hour of the night. Ramel added that he had been notified that several columns of troops were entering Paris. But all these threatening probabilities had no effect upon Rovère, who declared that he was very comfortable where he was, and had excellent reasons for remaining so. Ramel, when he left the hall, met the commander of the cavalry post whose duty it was, like his own, to guard the councils. The latter announced that he had withdrawn his pickets, and ordered his troops, as well as the two cannon which were in the courtyard of the Tuileries, to cross the bridges.

"How could you do such a thing, when I told you to do just the contrary?" asked Ramel.

"General, it was not my fault," replied the commander; "the commander-in-chief, Augereau, gave the order, and the cavalry officer refused positively to obey yours."

Ramel went back and again begged Rovère to warn his colleague, telling him what had occurred since he had seen him. But Rovère was obstinate in his confidence, and replied that all these movements of troops signified absolutely nothing; that he had known of them before, and that several corps of troops were to go upon the bridges at an early hour to manœuvre. Ramel might therefore be perfectly easy, for Rovère's source of information was reliable, and he could count upon it; and Ramel could obey the order of the minister of war without any hesitation.

But a dread of being separated from his corps prevented Ramel from obeying. He went home, but instead of going to bed remained ready dressed and armed.

At three o'clock in the morning a former member of the bodyguard with whom he had been very intimate in the Army of the Pyrenees, named Poinçot, announced himself as a messenger from General Lemoine, and handed Ramel a note couched in the following terms:

General Lemoine, in the name of the Directory, summons the commander of the grenadiers of the Corps Legislatif to give passage across the swing-bridge to a body of fifteen hundred men charged with executing the government's orders.

"I am surprised," said Ramel, "that an old comrade, who should know me better, could consent to bring me an order which I cannot obey without dishonoring myself."

"Do as you please," replied Poinçot; "but I warn you that all resistance will be useless. Eight hundred of your grenadiers have already been covered by four cannon."

"I receive no orders save from the Corps Legislatif," exclaimed Ramel.

And hastening from his house he started on a run to the Tuileries. An alarm-gun sounded so near him that he thought it was a signal for attack. On his way he met two of his chiefs of battalion, Ponsard and Fléhard, both excellent officers in whom he had every confidence.

He hastened to the committee-room again, where he found Generals Pichegru and Villot. He at once sent notices to General Mathieu Dumas and the presidents of the two Councils, Laffon-Ladébat, president of the Council of the Ancients, and Siméon, president of the Five Hundred. He also went to warn the deputies whose lodgings were known to him to be near the Tuileries.

At that moment, they having forced the iron gates of the swing-bridge, the divisions of Augereau and Lemoine were enabled to unite. The soldiers of the two armies filled the garden; a battery was directed against the Hall of the Ancients, all the avenues were closed, and all the posts doubled and covered by superior forces.

We have told how the door opened, how a throng of soldiers entered the hall of the committee, with Augereau at its head, and how, when no one else had dared lay a hand on Pichegru, Augereau himself had committed that sacrilege, and had thrown down and bound the man who had been his general; and finally how, after Pichegru was mastered, the other deputies offered no farther resistance, and the order was given to take the prisoners to the Temple.

The three directors were waiting, together with the minister of police, who, once his placards were posted, had returned to them. The minister of police advised that the prisoners should be instantly shot in the courtyard of the Luxembourg under pretext that they had been taken with arms in their hands. Rewbell agreed with him; the gentle La Reveillière-Lepaux, the man of peace, who had always advised merciful measures, was ready to give the fatal order, saying, like Cicero of Lentullus and Cethegus: "They have lived!"

Barras alone, it is but justice to say, opposed this measure with all his might, saying that, unless they put him in prison during the execution, he should throw himself between the bullets and the prisoners. Finally a deputy named Guillemardet, who had made himself a friend of the directors by joining their faction, proposed that the prisoners be banished to Cayenne "to be done with it." This amendment was put to the vote and enthusiastically carried.

The minister of police considered it his duty to conduct Barthélemy personally to the Temple. We have said that his servant Letellier asked to be permitted to accompany him. They refused at first, but finally granted his request.

"Who is this man?" asked Augereau, who did not recognize him as one of the exiles.

"He is my friend," said Barthélemy; "he asked to be allowed to follow me, and—"

"Pooh!" said Augereau, interrupting him, "when he knows where you are going he will not be so eager."

"I beg your pardon, citizen-general," replied Letellier, "but wherever my master goes I will follow him."

"Even to the scaffold?" asked Augereau.

"Above all, to the scaffold," replied the man.

By dint of entreaties and prayers the doors of the prison were opened to the wives of the prisoners. Every step they took

in the courtyard, where a queen of France had suffered so bitterly, was fresh agony to them. Drunken soldiers insulted them at every turn.

"Are you coming to see those beggars?" they asked, pointing to the prisoners. "Make haste and say farewell to them to-day, for they will be shot to-morrow."

As we have already said, Pichegru was not married. When he came to Paris he did not wish to supplant poor Rose, for whom, as we have said, he had bought a cotton umbrella from his savings, which had delighted her much. When he saw his colleagues' wives, he approached them, and took Delarue's little son, who was crying, in his arms.

"Why are you crying so, my child?" he asked with tears in his own eyes as he kissed him.

"Because," replied the child, "wicked soldiers have arrested my papa."

"You are right, poor little fellow," replied Pichegru, darting a look of scorn at those who were watching him, "they are wicked soldiers. Good soldiers would not allow themselves to be turned into executioners."

Augereau wrote Bonaparte that same day as follows:

At last, general, my mission is accomplished; the promises of the Army of Italy were fulfilled last night.

The Directory determined upon a bold stroke; the moment for its accomplishment was still undecided, and the preparations were still incomplete, when the fear of being forestalled precipitated matters. At midnight I sent orders to the troops to march upon given points. Before daybreak all those points and all the principal squares were filled with artillery; at daybreak the halls of the councils were surrounded, the guards of the Directory fraternized with our troops, and the members whose name I send you were arrested and taken to the Temple.

A large number are being pursued; Carnot has disappeared. Paris is calm, marvelling at a crisis which should have been terrible, but which passed off like a holiday. The robust patriot of the faubourgs proclaims the safety of the Republic, and the black collars are downcast.

Now, it is for the wise energy of the Directory and the two councils to do the rest. The place of sessions is changed and the first proceedings promise well. This event has taken us a long stride toward peace; it is for you to cross the intervening space which still separates us from it.

Do not forget the bill of exchange for twenty-five thousand francs; it is urgent.

AUGEREAU.

Then followed the list, containing seventy-four names.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE EXILES

The Temple suggested associations which were not entirely without remorse for the political consciences of those who had been taken there.

Some of them, after they had sent Louis XVI. to the Temple, that is to say, after they had closed the prison doors upon him, had opened them again only to send him to the scaffold, which means that several of the prisoners were regicides.

Accorded their liberty in the interior of the prison, they rallied around Pichegru, as being the most eminent personality among them. Pichegru, who had nothing to reproach himself with as far as Louis XVI. was concerned, and who, on the contrary, was being punished for the too great pity which he had evinced for the Bourbons—Pichegru, the archeologist, historian, and man of letters, placed himself at the head of the group who asked permission to visit the apartments of the tower.

Lavilleheurnois, former Master of Requests under Louis XVI., secret agent of the Bourbons during the Revolution, and a participant with Brotier-Deprêlé in a conspiracy against the Republic, acted as their guide.

"Here is the chamber of the unfortunate Louis XVI.," he said, opening the door of the apartment in which the august prisoner had been confined.

Rovère, the same to whom Ramel had applied, and who had told him that there was nothing to fear from the concentrated movement of the troops—Rovère, the former lieutenant of Jourdan Coupe-Tête, who had apologized to the Assembly for the massacre at the Glacière, could not support this sight, and withdrew, striking his forehead with his hands as he went.

Pichegru, now as calm as though he had been again with the Army of the Rhine, deciphered the inscriptions which were written in pencil on the woodwork and scratched with a diamond on the window pane. He read this one:

"O God! pardon those who have killed my parents!
O my brother, watch over me from heaven!
May the French be happy!"

There could be no doubt as to who had traced those words, but he wished to assure himself of the truth. Lavilleheurnois asserted that he recognized the handwriting of Madame Royale; but Pichegru sent for the porter, who assured him that it was indeed the august daughter of Louis XVI. who had written these lines, so replete with Christian spirit. Then he added: "Gentlemen, I beg of you not to efface those lines so long as I am here. I have vowed that no one shall touch them."

"Very well, my friend," said Pichegru; "you are a worthy man." And while the other spoke, Delarue wrote beneath the words: "May the French be happy!"

"Heaven will hear the prayers of the innocent."

Meanwhile, although they were separated from the world, the prisoners had the satisfaction of learning upon several occasions that they were not forgotten.

On the very evening of the 18th Fructidor, as the wife of one of the prisoners was leaving the prison, she was accosted by a man she did not know.

"Madame," said he, "you are doubtless connected with one of the unfortunate men who were arrested this morning."

"Alas! yes, sir," she replied.

"Well, then, permit me to send him, whoever he may be, this slight loan, which he can repay in better times." And so saying, he put three rolls of louis in her hand.

An old man whom Madame Laffon-Ladébat did not know came to her house on the 19th Fructidor.

"Madame," he said, "I feel for your husband all the esteem and the friendship which he deserves. Be good enough to give him these fifty louis. I regret exceedingly that I have only this small sum at present to offer him." And then, noting her

hesitation and divining its cause, he added: "Madame, your delicacy need not suffer. I am only lending this money to your husband; he can repay me when he returns."

Almost all the men who were condemned to exile had occupied the foremost offices of the government for a long time, and it is a remarkable fact that on the 18th Fructidor, when they were about to be exiled, they were all poor.

Pichegru, the poorest of all, when he learned that he was not to be shot, as he had at first supposed, but only exiled, was much disturbed about his brother and sister, whose sole support he had always been. As for poor Rose, we know that she was able to support herself with her needle, and was richer than any of them. Had she known of the trouble which had befallen her friend, she would surely have hastened to him from Besançon and opened her purse to him.

That which most disturbed the man who had saved France on the Rhine and who had conquered Holland, the richest of all the provinces; who had handled millions, and refused to sell himself for millions; was not married, and was accused of having received a million in money, of having exacted a promise of the principality of Arbois, with two hundred thousand livres' income and reversion to his wife and children, and the château of Chambord, with twelve cannon which he had captured from the enemy—that which most disturbed this man, who had no wife or children, who had given himself for nothing when he might have sold himself for a great price, was a debt of six hundred francs, which he had not paid.

He sent for his brother and sister and said to the latter: "You will find at my lodgings the hat, coat and sword which I wore when I conquered Holland. Put them up for sale with the inscription, 'The hat, coat and sword of Pichegru, who has been exiled to Cayenne.'"

His sister did as he bade her, and the following day she came and told him that a pious hand had paid her the six hundred francs and that the debt was cancelled.

Barthélemy, one of the most prominent men of the time, politically speaking, since he had negotiated the treaties with Prussia and Spain, the first which the Republic had ever signed, and who could have compelled each of these powers to have given him a million, had for sole property a farm which brought him in an annual income of eight hundred livres.

Villot, at the time of his arrest, possessed only one thousand francs. A week before he had lent them to a man who called himself his friend, but who failed to return them before his departure.

Laffon-Ladébat, who, since the proclamation of the Republic, had neglected his own interests for those of his country, and who had once possessed an immense fortune, could scarcely get together five hundred francs when he learned of his condemnation. His children, upon whom had devolved the duty of paying his creditors, did so only to find themselves thereafter in penury.

Delarue supported his old father and all his family. Rich before the Revolution, but ruined by it, he owed the help which he received at his departure to friends. His father, an old man of sixty-nine, was inconsolable, but grief could not kill him. He lived in the hope of seeing his son again some day.

Three months later he was told that an officer of the navy, who had just arrived in Paris, had met Delarue in the deserts of Guiana. He at once wished to see and talk with him. The officer's story was of interest to the whole family, and they were all assembled to meet him. The officer entered. Delarue's father rose to go and meet him; but just as he was about to throw his arms around his neck, joy killed him, and he fell dead at the feet of the man who said: "I have seen your son."

As for Tronçon de Coudray, who had nothing but his salary to live on, he was deprived of all his offices when he was arrested, and went away with two louis for his entire fortune.

Perhaps I am wrong, but it seems to me, since the historians neglect this duty, that it is well for the novelist to follow in the wake of revolutions and *coups d'état*, and teach men that it is not always those men to whom statues are erected who are most worthy of respect and admiration.

Augereau, after having been charged with the arrests, was appointed to watch the prisoners. He gave them for their immediate keeper a man who had been, until within a month, at the galleys at Toulon, where he had been sent after a trial by court-martial, for theft, murder, and incendiarism, committed in the Vendée.

The prisoners remained at the Temple from the morning of the 18th Fructidor until the evening of the 21st. At midnight the jailer woke them, telling them that they were to start, and that they had a quarter of an hour in which to get ready. Pichegru, who still preserved the habit of sleeping with his clothes on, was ready first, and went from room to room to

hasten his comrades. He went down first, and found ex-director Barthélemy between General Augereau and minister of the police Sothin, who had brought him to the Temple in his own carriage. Sothin had treated him well, and as Barthélemy thanked him, the minister replied: "We know what revolutions are. Your turn to-day, ours, perhaps, to-morrow."

When Barthélemy, anxious about the country rather than about his own affairs, asked if no harm had resulted from it and if the public peace had not been disturbed.

"No," replied the minister; "the people swallowed the pill; and, as the dose was a good one, they took it without any trouble." Then, seeing all the exiles at the foot of the tower, he added: "Gentlemen, I wish you a pleasant journey."

Then getting into his carriage he drove away.

Augereau ordered the roll of the prisoners to be read. As they were named, a guard led them to the carriages past a file of soldiers who insulted them as they went along. Some of those men—miserable river bastards always ready to insult those who were down—tried to reach across the others in order to strike the exiles in the face, to tear their clothing, or to bespatter them with mud.

"Why do you let them go?" they cried. "You promised us that they should be shot."

"My dear *general*," said Pichegru, as he passed Augereau, emphasizing the title, "if you promised those men that, you are doing very wrong not to keep your word."



CHAPTER XXXIII

THE JOURNEY

FOUR carriages, or, rather, four boxes on wheels, inclosed on all sides with iron bars, which bruised the prisoners at every jolt, received the exiles. Four of them were placed in each cage, and no attention was paid either to their weakness or their wounds. Some of them had received sabre cuts; others had been wounded, either by the soldiers who had arrested them or by the mob, whose opinions always will be that the conquered do not suffer enough.

There was a keeper for each wagon and each group of four men, who had the care of the key of the padlock which closed the grating which served in lieu of a door.

General Dutertre commanded the escort, which consisted of four hundred infantry, two hundred cavalry, and two cannon.

Every time the exiles got in or out of the cages, the two pieces were trained diagonally upon the carriages, while gunners stood ready, with lighted matches in their hands, to fire the cannon, should any of them attempt to escape, both upon those who made the attempt and upon those who did not.

The condemned men began their journey on the 22d Fructidor (8th of September) in the midst of a terrible storm. They had to cross the whole length of Paris, starting with the Temple, and leaving the city through the Barrière d'Enfer, to take the road to Orléans. But instead of following the Rue Saint-Jacques, the escort, after crossing the bridge, turned to the right and led the procession to the Luxembourg. Here the three directors, or rather Barras, who was the three in himself, was giving a ball.

Barras, when notified, hastened to the balcony, followed by the guests, and pointed out Pichegru, three days earlier the rival of Moreau, Hoche, and Bonaparte, and with him Barthélemy, his former colleague, Villot, Delarue, Ramel—in short, all those whom the turn of Fortune's wheel or the forgetfulness of Providence had put in his power. The exiles heard Barras, amid noisy bursts of laughter and joy enjoin Dutertre, Augereau's man, "to take good care of these gentlemen." To which Dutertre replied: "Never fear, general."

We shall soon see what Barras meant when he said "Take good care of these gentlemen."

In the meantime the people who were coming out of the Odéon Club surrounded the wagons; and being refused permission to do what they urgently demanded to do—to tear the exiles to pieces—they consoled themselves by throwing fireworks which enabled them to see the prisoners without any trouble.

Finally the procession passed through the Rue d'Enfer to the accompaniment of fierce cries for their death and howls of rage, and left Paris. At two o'clock in the afternoon, having made only twenty-four miles, they reached Arpajon. Barthélemy and Barbé-Marbois, the weakest of the exiles, were lying upon their faces, apparently exhausted.

When they heard that the day's journey was ended, the prisoners hoped that they would be conducted to some suitable place where they could take a little rest. But the commander of the escort took them to the prison reserved for thieves, eagerly examining their faces and showing the utmost delight when they manifested repulsion and disgust. Unfortunately, the first wagon to be opened was the one in which Pichegru had travelled; his impassive face did not betray the least emotion. He merely said as they approached the hole: "If it is a stairway, give me a light; if it is a well, tell me so at once."

It was a staircase, of which several steps were missing. This calmness exasperated Dutertre.

"Ah, rascal," he said, "you think you can defy me; but we shall see one of these days whether I cannot find the end of your insolence."

Pichegru, who reached the bottom first, called out to his companions that some one had been thoughtful enough to spread straw for them, and thanked Dutertre for the attention. But the straw was soaking wet and the cell was foul.

Barthélemy came next, gentle, calm, but exhausted and aware that he could not expect an instant's repose. Lying half in the icy water, he raised his hands murmuring: "My God! my God!"

Then came Barbé-Marbois, who was upheld by the arms. At the mephitic odor which arose from the cell, he drew back and said: "Shoot me, and spare me the horror of such agony."

But the jailer's wife who stood behind him answered: "You are very particular. Better men than you have gone down

there without making such a fuss." And with a vigorous shove she sent him head first from top to bottom of the stairs.

Villot, who was next, heard Barbé-Marbois cry out, and the answering cry of his comrades who darted forward to seize him as he fell, and grabbing the woman by the neck, he said: "Upon my word, I have a good notion to strangle you. What do you all say?"

"Leave her alone, and come down here with us," answered Pichegru.

They had raised Barbé-Marbois. His face was bruised, and his jawbone broken. The three exiles who were safe and sound began to cry: "A surgeon! A surgeon!"

There was no answer. Then they asked for water to bathe their comrade's wounds; but the door was closed and it did not open until two hours later, and then only to pass in their dinner, consisting of a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water.

They were all very thirsty, but Pichegru, accustomed to all sorts of privations, immediately offered his portion of the water to bathe Barbé-Marbois's wound. The other prisoners, however, would not permit this sacrifice. The necessary amount of water was taken from the general fund; and as Barbé-Marbois could not eat, his portion was divided among the others.

On the next day, 23d Fructidor (9th of September), they started again at seven in the morning. No inquiries were made as to how the exiles had passed the night, and the wounded man was not allowed to see a surgeon. They reached Etampes at noon. Dutertre ordered a halt in the middle of the square, and exposed the prisoners to the insults of the crowd, who were permitted to surround the wagons, and who took advantage of the permission to hoot, curse, and bespatter with mud the men of whose crime they were ignorant, and who were prisoners in their eyes simply because they were prisoners. The exiles insisted that they go on, or be allowed to leave the wagons. Both requests were refused. One of the exiles, Tronçon de Coudray, was deputy for the Department of the Seine-et-Oise, which includes Etampes, and which was then the very canton whose inhabitants had supported his candidacy with the most enthusiasm.

He resented this ingratitude and desertion of his people therefore all the more keenly. Rising suddenly, as if he had been in the tribune, and replying to those who had called him by name, he said:

"Yes, it is I—I myself, your representative! Do you recognize him in this iron cage? It is I, whom you have intrusted with your rights, which are being violated in my person. I am dragged to punishment without having been tried, without even having been accused. My crime is that I have protected your liberty, your property, your persons; that I have wished to give peace to France, and by so doing to return to you your children who are being slaughtered by the enemy's bayonets. My crime is that I have been faithful to the Constitution to which we have sworn allegiance, and to-day, as a reward for my zeal in defending you, you join the ranks of my executioners! You are wretches and cowards, unworthy to be represented by a man of heart."

And he relapsed into his apparent indifference once more. The crowd was for a moment crushed and awed by this attack; but they soon renewed their insults, which became more outrageous than ever when the condemned men were given their dinner, which consisted of four loaves of bread and four bottles of wine. This exhibition lasted three hours.

That evening they stopped for the night at Angerville, and Dutertre wished to put the prisoners together in one cell, as he had done the night before. But an adjutant-general, who by an odd coincidence was named Augereau, took it upon himself to lodge them in an inn, where they passed a comfortable night, and where Barbé-Marbois was able to secure the services of a surgeon.

On the 24th Fructidor (10th September) they reached Orléans early, and passed the rest of that day and the following night in a house of confinement which had formerly been an Ursuline convent. This time the deputies were not guarded by their escort, but by gendarmes, who, while obeying orders, treated them with the utmost consideration. They quickly recognized in the two servants who had been sent to help them, in spite of their disguise of coarse clothing, two ladies of rank who had sought this opportunity to offer help and money. They even promised Villot and Delarue to assist them to escape. They could facilitate the escape of two prisoners, but no more. Villot and Delarue refused, fearing that their flight would aggravate the fate of their two companions. The names of these two angels of charity have never been known. To name them at that time would have been to denounce them.

History has from time to time such moments of regret which give rise to a sigh.

The next day the party reached Blois. A crowd of boatmen were waiting for them on the outskirts of the town in the hopes of breaking open the wagons and murdering the prisoners. But the captain of cavalry commanding the detachment,

whose name was Gautier—history has preserved his name, as it has that of Dutertre—signalled to the exiles that they need have no fear.

Then he took forty men and routed the rabble. But insults were nevertheless lavished upon them. The names of rascals, regicides, and panders were hurled blindly at them by the furious crowd, through the midst of which they passed on their way to a damp little church, where the prisoners found a small quantity of straw strewn upon the floor.

As they entered the church, the people crowded near enough for Pichegru to feel some one slip a little note into his hand. As soon as they were alone, Pichegru read the little note. It contained these words:

General, it only depends on yourself to leave your prison, mount a horse, and escape under an assumed name by means of a passport. If you consent, as soon as you have read this note, approach the guard who is watching you, taking care to leave your hat on your head; this will mean that you consent. Then, from midnight until two o'clock be dressed and on the alert.

Pichegru walked toward the guard bareheaded. The man who had endeavored to save him cast a glance of admiration at him and walked away.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE EMBARKATION

The preparations for departure from Blois consumed such a length of time that the prisoners feared that they were to make a stay there, and that during that stay some harm would befall them. They were all the more convinced when the adjutant-general, who was in command of their troop under Dutertre—one Colin, well known in the country as the author of the massacres of the 2d of September—and one of his companions, named Guillet, who had no better reputation, entered the prison one morning about six o'clock.

They seemed much excited, grumbled as though to egg themselves on, and looked at the exiles with a baleful eye. The municipal officer who had accompanied the prisoners from Paris had an inspiration. He went straight up to them, and looking them in the eye, said: "Why do you delay the start? Everything has been ready for a long time. The crowd increases and your conduct is more than suspicious. I have seen and heard you both stirring up the people and urging them to acts of violence against the prisoners. I swear to you that should aught befall them when they go out, I will place my deposition upon the register, and that the responsibility shall fall upon you."

The two knaves stammered some excuse. The wagons were brought out, and the prisoners were accompanied with the same shouts, jeers and imprecations which had greeted them on the preceding day; but they were none of them hit by the stones which were thrown or by the blows which were aimed at them.

At Amboise they were placed for the night in a room so small that they were unable to lie down upon the straw. They were obliged either to stand up or to sit down. They hoped to get some rest at Tours, but they were cruelly disappointed. The town authorities had recently been subjected to a weeding-out process, and were still terrorized. The prisoners were taken to the prison reserved for the galley-slaves. They were compelled to mingle with them, and some of the deputies asked for a place by themselves.

"That is your apartment," said the jailer, pointing to a little cell which was both damp and dirty.

Thereupon the galley-slaves gave evidence of more humanity than the jailers, for one of them approached the exiles, and said humbly:

"Gentlemen, we are very sorry to see you here. We are not worthy to approach you; but if, in the unhappy state to which we are reduced, there is any service which we can render you, we pray you to be good enough to accept it. The cell which has been prepared for you is colder and damper than ours; we beg of you to take ours, which is larger and drier than yours."

Pichegru thanked the poor wretches in the name of his companions, and, shaking hands with the one who had acted as spokesman, he said: "So it is to you that we must now look for human hearts!"

The exiles had not eaten for more than thirty hours, and each one now received a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine. It was a gala day for them.

The next day they stopped at Saint-Maure. Lieutenant-general Dutertre, having found in this little town a flying column of the National Guard composed of peasants, took advantage of the opportunity to relieve his troops, who could hardly put one foot before the other. He therefore ordered the column to guard the exiles, under the supervision of the municipality, which fortunately had not in this case been weeded out.

These worthy peasants took pity on the unfortunate prisoners. They brought them food and wine in such quantities that they could for the first time eat and drink in a measure commensurate with their hunger and thirst. Besides this, they were less strictly guarded; and so negligent were these worthy people, most of whom were armed only with pikes, that they were permitted to go as far as the causeway, whence they could see the forest, which seemed to have been placed there expressly to afford them a refuge.

Ramel ventured to suggest a flight; but some opposed it on the score that it would seem like a confession of guilt, and others refused because their escape would have cruelly compromised their keepers, and would have involved the first of their kind who had shown compassion for their sufferings.

Day came and they had hardly slept, for the whole night had slipped away in the discussion, and they were forced to re-enter the iron cages and become once again the property of Dutertre. They crossed the dense forest at which they had

gazed so eagerly the previous evening. The roads were frightful. Some of them obtained permission to walk between four of the cavalry. Barbé-Marbois, Barthélemy and Du Coudray, wounded and almost at the point of death, could not take advantage of this permission. They were lying upon the floor, and at every jolt were thrown against the iron bars, which bruised them and drew from them, in spite of their stoicism, cries of agony. Barthélemy was the only one who did not utter a single groan.

At Châtellereault they were confined in a cell so foul that three of them fell down asphyxiated as they entered. Pichegru pushed open the door just as they were about to close it, and seizing a soldier threw him to the rear of the cell. The man almost fainted, and reported that it would be impossible to live in such an atmosphere. The door was left open and a sentinel placed before it.

Barbé-Marbois was very ill. Du Coudray, who was taking care of him, was seated on the straw at his side. A man who for three years had been in irons in the neighboring cell obtained leave to visit them, brought them some fresh water, and offered his bed to Barbé-Marbois, who felt a little better after a couple of hours' sleep.

"Have patience," this man said to them; "one can get accustomed to anything in time. I am an example of this, for I have lived for three years in a cell like yours."

At Lusignan the prison was too small to hold the sixteen exiles. Rain poured in torrents and a cold wind was blowing from the north. Dutertre, who stopped at nothing, ordered the cages to be closed, had the horses unharnessed, and cages and prisoners remained in the public square. They had been there about an hour when the mayor of the town and the commander of the National Guard came and offered to be responsible for them if they were allowed to pass the night at the inn. The authorities gained their point, though not without some difficulty. The prisoners were no sooner established in three rooms, with sentinels at the doors and beneath the windows, than they saw a courier ride up and stop at the same inn to which they had been taken. Some of them, more hopeful than the others, were of the opinion that the courier came with good news. All were convinced that he was the bearer of a message of importance.

In fact he carried an order for the arrest of General Dutertre for extortions and larcenies committed since the departure of the exiles, and to take him back to Paris.

They found the eight hundred louis d'or which had been given him for the expense of the convoy still in his possession, which he had pocketed, levying contributions instead upon the towns through which he had passed. The exiles heard this with joy. They saw the carriage drive up which was to take him; and Ramel, whose curiosity impelled him to neglect precaution, opened the window. The sentinel in the street fired at once, and the ball shattered the window-pane.

Dutertre arrested, the conduct of the convoy fell to his second in command, Guillet.

But, as we have said, Guillet was not much better than Dutertre. On the day following, when they reached Saint-Maixant, the mayor approached the exiles and was so ill-advised as to say to them: "Gentlemen, I sympathize deeply with your situation, and all good citizens share my feeling."

Guillet himself seized the mayor, pushed him toward two soldiers, and ordered him to be imprisoned.

But this act of oppression so revolted the townsfolk, by whom the mayor seemed to be much beloved, that they rose in a body and forced Guillet to return them their mayor.

The thing that most disturbed the exiles was the fact that they were ignorant of their destination. They had heard Rochefort named, but in the vaguest possible manner. Deprived of all communication with their families, they could obtain no information as to the destiny which awaited them.

The secret was revealed at Surgeres. The mayor insisted that all the prisoners should be lodged at the inn, and had gained his point. Pichegru, Aubry, and Delarue were lying upon mattresses spread upon the floor of a room in the second story, separated from the floor below by planks which were so poorly joined that they could see and hear all that was going on below.

The leaders of the escort, all unsuspecting of the fact that they were both seen and heard, were at supper in the room below. A naval officer had just joined them. Every word that they said was of moment to the unfortunate exiles, and they listened attentively.

The supper, which was long and abundant, was very lively. The tortures which they inflicted upon the exiles formed the theme of merriment. But when the supper was finished, about half-past twelve, the naval officer remarked that it was about time to begin operations. This word "operations," as can readily be understood, riveted the attention of the

listeners.

A man who was wholly unknown to them, and who acted as Guillet's secretary, brought pens, paper and ink, and began to write at that officer's dictation. He dictated a report, that, in conformity with the last orders of the Directory, the prisoners were to leave their cages only to go aboard the "Brilliant"—a brigantine fitting out at Rochefort to receive them.

Pichegru, Aubry, and Delarue, although thunderstruck by the tenor of this report, made a day ahead of time, which left no doubt as to their deportation, said nothing about it to their companions. They thought that it would be soon enough for them to learn the sad news at Rochefort.

They arrived there on the 21st of September, about three or four o'clock in the afternoon. The convoy left the main street and followed the fortification, where an immense crowd awaited them, turned the corner of the square, and went toward the bank of the Charente. There was now no longer any doubt, either for those who had heard the fatal secret, or for the thirteen who were as yet ignorant of it. They were about to be sent on shipboard, deprived of the barest necessities of life, and exposed to the dangers of a voyage whose goal was unknown to them.

At last the wagons stopped. Some hundreds of sailors and marines, disgracing the uniform of the navy, placed themselves in line with the exiles as they descended from their cages—which they almost regretted, to such extremes were they reduced. Ferocious cries welcomed them: "Down with the tyrants! Into the water with the traitors! Into the water with them!"

One of these men stepped forward, doubtless to accomplish his threat. The others pressed after him. General Villot walked straight up to him, and folding his arms, said: "Villain! you are too great a coward to render me that service!"

A boat approached, an official called to them, and, one after another, as they were named, the exiles got into the boat. The last, Barbé-Marbois, was in such a desperate condition that the official declared that if they took him aboard in that state he would not live two days.

"What is that to you?" brutally demanded Guillet; "you are only responsible for his bones."

A quarter of an hour later the exiles were on board a two-masted vessel lying at anchor in the middle of the river. It was the "Brilliant," a little privateer taken from the English. They were received there by a dozen soldiers who seemed to have been especially chosen for the position of executioners. The exiles were thrust into a little space between decks so narrow that scarcely half of them could sit down, and so low that the others could not stand upright. They were obliged to take turns in two positions between which there was not much choice.

An hour after they had been put there some one remembered that they ought to have something to eat. Two buckets were sent down, one empty, the other filled with half-cooked beans swimming in reddish water that was even more disgusting than the vessel which contained it. A loaf of bread and some water, the only things of which the prisoners partook, completed the foul repast which was destined for men whom their fellow-citizens had chosen as the most worthy among them to be their representatives.

The exiles would not touch the beans in the bucket—although they had eaten nothing for thirty-six hours—either because they were disgusted with their appearance, or because the guards had not seen fit to give them either spoons or forks; and, as they had to leave the door open in order to admit the air, they were obliged to submit to the jeers of the soldiers, who finally grew so offensive in their language that Pichegru, forgetting that he no longer held command over them, ordered them to be silent.

"You will do well to hold your tongue yourself," replied one of them; "you had better be careful, you are not out of our hands yet."

"How old are you?" asked Pichegru, seeing that he looked very young.

"Sixteen," replied the soldier.

"Gentlemen," said Pichegru, "if ever we return to France we must not forget this child; he promises well."

CHAPTER XXXV

FAREWELL, FRANCE!

Five hours elapsed before the vessel got under way; she did so at last, however, and after sailing for an hour, she stopped in the open roadstead. It was nearly midnight.

Then there was a great commotion on deck. Among the innumerable threats which greeted the exiles at Rochefort, cries of "Into the water!" and "Drink out of the great cup!" had been most frequent, and had reached the prisoners' ears. No one expressed his thought, but they each expected to find the end of their tortures in the bed of the Charente. The vessel to which they had been transferred was doubtless one of those which had a movable plug—an ingenious invention of Nero's to rid himself of his mother, and utilized by Carrier to drown the royalists.

They heard the order to put two of the ship's longboats into the water; then an officer commanded every one to stand to his place in a loud voice. Then, after a moment's silence, some one called the names of Pichegru and Aubry.

They embraced their companions and went on deck. A quarter of an hour passed. Suddenly the names of Barthélemy and Delarue were called.

Doubtless the two others had been made away with, and now it was their turn. They embraced their comrades, as Pichegru and Aubry had done, and went on deck, from which they were made to pass into a little boat, where they had to sit side by side in the thwart. A sailor placed himself upon another thwart opposite; the sail was hoisted and they were off like a shot. The two exiles kept feeling the planks with their feet, fancying that they could see the hole which had already swallowed up their comrades.

But this time their fears were without foundation; they were merely being transferred from the brigantine "Brilliant" to the corvette "Vaillante," whither two of their companions had preceded them and where the others were to follow. They were received by Captain Julien, in whose face they sought in vain to read the secret of their destiny. He affected to look severely at them, but when he was alone with them he said: "Gentlemen, it is plain to be seen that you have suffered terribly. But have patience; while executing the orders of the Directory, I shall overlook and neglect nothing that can add to your comfort."

Unhappily for them, Guillet had followed them. He heard the last words, and an hour later Captain Julien was replaced by Captain Laporte.

Strange freak of Fate! The "Vaillante," a corvette carrying twenty-two guns, which the exiles were now boarding, had recently been built at Bayonne; and Villot, who was commanding general of the district, had been chosen to christen her. He himself had selected the name "Vaillante."

The exiles were sent between decks; and as it did not occur to any one to give them anything to eat, Dessonville, who suffered more than any of the others from lack of food, asked: "Do they really propose to let us die of hunger?"

"No, no, gentlemen," said an officer named Des Poyes, laughing. "Do not be uneasy, you will have your supper."

"Only give us some fruit," said the dying Barbé-Marbois; "something to cool our mouths."

A fresh burst of laughter welcomed this request, and some one threw the poor famished creatures a couple of loaves of bread from the deck.

"What a delicious supper," exclaims Ramel, "for poor devils who had eaten nothing for forty hours. And yet a supper we often thought of with regret, for it was the last time that we were given any bread."

Ten minutes later twelve hammocks were distributed to the prisoners; but Pichegru, Ramel, Villot and Dessonville received none.

"And where are we to sleep?" asked Pichegru.

"Come on deck," replied the voice of the new captain, "and I will see that you are told." Pichegru and the others who had not received hammocks did as they were told.

"Put these men in the Lion's Den," said the captain; "that is the lodging set aside for them."

The Lion's Den is the cell set aside for sailors who are condemned to death. When the exiles between decks heard this

order they gave vent to angry cries.

"No separation!" they cried. "Put us in that horrible cell with those gentlemen, or leave them here with us."

Barthélemy and his faithful Letellier—that brave servant who had refused to leave his master—dashed on deck; and seeing their four comrades in the clutches of soldiers who were dragging them toward the cell, they slid rather than climbed down the ladder, and found themselves in the hold with them.

"Here!" cried the captain from the top of the hatchway; "come back here, or I will have you driven up with the bayonet." But they lay down.

"There is neither first nor last among us," they retorted; "we are all guilty or we are all innocent. You must treat us all alike."

The soldiers advanced toward them with bayonets levelled, but they did not move. It was only when Pichegru and the others insisted upon it that they returned to the deck. The four were then left in the deepest darkness in the horrible cell, which was foul with exhalations from the hold. They had neither hammock nor coverings, and could not lie down, for the cell was too narrow, nor yet stand up, for it was too low.

The twelve others crowded between decks were not much better off; for the hatches were closed, and, like their comrades, they had no air and could not move about.

Toward four o'clock in the morning the captain gave the order to set sail; and amid the shouts of the crew, the creaking of the rigging, the roaring of the waves breaking against the corvette, like a sob from the sides of the vessel itself, came the last cry: "Farewell, France!"

And like an echo from the entrails of the hold the same cry was repeated, almost unintelligibly, on account of the depths whence it came: "Farewell, France."

The reader may perhaps wonder that I have dwelt so long upon this melancholy tale, which would become more melancholy still, were we to follow the ill-fated exiles to the end of their journey of forty-five days. But the reader would probably not have my courage, which I owe to the necessity not of rehabilitating them—I leave to history that task—but of directing the compassion of future generations toward the men who sacrificed themselves for France.

It has seemed to me that the old pagan saying, "Woe to the vanquished!" has always been brutal, and is nothing less than impious in these days of modernity; and by some instinct of my heart I always incline toward the vanquished and my sympathies are ever with them.

They who have read my books know that I have described with the same degree of impartiality and sympathy the demise of Joan of Arc at Rouen and the passing of Mary Stuart at Fotheringay, the appearance of Charles I. upon the scaffold at Whitehall and of Marie Antoinette on the Place de la Révolution.

But there is one peculiarity of historians which I have ever deplored, and that is that they marvel at the tears a king can shed, without studying as carefully the burden of agony which oppresses that poor human machine when dying, when it is supported by the conviction of its innocence and integrity, whether it belong to the middle or even the lower classes of society.

Such were these men whose sufferings I have endeavored to describe, and for whom we find not a single historian expressing regret, and who, by the clever expedient adopted by their persecutors of confusing them with men like Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varenes, were first despoiled of the sympathy of their contemporaries, and then cheated of their inheritance of the compassion of posterity.

THE EIGHTH CRUSADE

When we announced to you, dear readers, the importance in matter of size alone of our novel of "The Whites and the Blues," that is to say, when we warned you that it would comprise a certain number of volumes, we said at the same time that it was the sequel of "The Companions of Jehu."

But as our plan comprised the description of the great events of the end of the last century and the beginning of this one, from 1793 to 1815—that is to say, to offer you a panorama of the twenty-two years of our history—we have filled nearly three volumes with descriptions of the principal crises of the Revolution, and have only reached the year 1799, in which our story of "The Companions of Jehu" begins.

If several of our characters, who play parts in that novel also appear in "The Whites and the Blues," it will not be surprising if at five or six points of the fresh episode upon which we are about to enter, the two narratives coincide, and if some of the chapters of the first book are repeated naturally enough in the second, since the events are not only on parallel lines, but are often identical.

Once we have passed the execution of Morgan and his companions, our novel will in reality become a sequel to "The Companions of Jehu," since the third and only remaining brother of the family of Sainte-Hermine becomes the hero and principal personage of the volumes which remain to be published under the title of "The Empire."

We give this explanation, dear readers, that you may not be surprised at this coincidence between the two books; and if we dared to ask so much at your hands, we would beg you to read again "The Companions of Jehu" when reading the "Eighth Crusade."

Do I need to add, dear readers, that this new work is the most strictly historical of any that I have undertaken, and was conceived, composed and written in pursuance of a great object; that, namely, of obtaining the perusal of ten volumes of history under the guise of ten volumes of romance? The events related in "The Whites and the Blues" are the most important of our age; and it is essential that our people, who have played such a leading rôle for the last seventy years in the affairs of Europe, and who are called upon to play a still greater part, should know these grand pages of our annals as they deserve to be known.

Then when restorations follow revolutions, and revolutions follow restorations, when each party, at the moment of its elevation, raises statues to those who represent it—statues destined to be cast down by the opposite party, only to give place to others—feeble minds and short-sighted visions falter before all these great men of the moment, who become traitors, and whom their contemporaries find no more difficulty in dishonoring than they did in exalting. It is therefore well for a keener eye and a more impartial mind to say: "This is plaster and this is marble; this is lead and this gold."

There are statues which are thrown from their pedestals and which rise again of themselves. There are, on the contrary, those which fall of themselves and which are shattered in their fall. Mirabeau, after having been carried to the Pantheon with great pomp, has no statue to-day. Louis XVI., after being tossed into the common ditch, has his memorial chapel.

Perhaps posterity has been rather severe with Mirabeau, and equally lenient toward Louis XVI., but we must bow alike before its severity and its indulgence. And yet, without envying Louis XVI. his memorial chapel, we would like to see a statue erected to Mirabeau. The more guilty of the two, in our opinion, was not he who sold but he who bought.



CHAPTER I

SAINT-JEAN-D'ACRE

On the 7th of April, 1799, the promontory on which Saint-Jean-d'Acre is built, the ancient Ptolemais, seemed to be wrapped in as much thunder and lightning as was Mount Sinai on the day when the Lord appeared to Moses from the burning bush.

Whence came those reports which shook the coast of Syria as with an earthquake? Whence came that smoke which covered the Gulf of Carmel with a cloud as thick as though Mount Elias had become a burning volcano?

The dream of one of those men, who with a few words change the whole destiny of the world, was accomplished. We are mistaken; we should have said, had vanished. But perhaps it had vanished only to give place to a reality of which this man, ambitious as he was, had never dared to dream.

On the 10th of September, 1797, when the conqueror of Italy heard at Passeriano of the 18th Fructidor and the promulgation of the law which condemned two of the directors, fifty-four deputies, and a hundred and forty-eight private individuals to exile, he fell into a profound revery.

He was doubtless calculating, in his mind, the influence which would accrue to him from this *coup d'état*, which his hand had directed although Augereau's had alone been visible. He was walking with his secretary, Bourrienne, in the beautiful park of the palace. Suddenly he raised his head and said without any apparent reference to what had gone before: "Assuredly, Europe is a mole-hill. There has never been a great empire or a great revolution save in the East, where there are six hundred millions of men."

Then when Bourrienne, totally unprepared for this outburst, looked at him in astonishment, he seemed to lose himself again in revery.

On the 1st of January, 1798, Bonaparte—who had been recognized in his box, in which he was trying to conceal himself, at the first performance of "Horatius Coclès," and saluted with an ovation and cries of "Long live Bonaparte!" which shook the building three times—returned to his house in the Rue Chantereine (newly named the Rue de la Victoire) wrapped in melancholy, and said to Bourrienne, to whom he always confided his gloomy thoughts:

"Believe me, Bourrienne, nobody remembers anything in Paris. If I should do nothing for six months I should be lost. One reputation in this Babylon replaces another; they will not see me three times at the theatre before they will cease to look at me."

Again, on the 29th of the same month, he said to Bourrienne, still absorbed in the same dream: "Bourrienne, I will not stay here; there is nothing to be done. If I do remain I am done for; everything goes to seed in France. I have already exhausted my glory. This poor little Europe cannot furnish enough; *I must go to the East.*"

Finally, when he was walking down the Rue Sainte-Anne, with Bourrienne, about a fortnight before his departure on the 18th of April, his secretary, to whom he had not spoken a word since they left the Rue Chantereine, in order to break the silence which annoyed him, said: "Then you have really decided to leave France, general?"

"Yes," replied Bonaparte, "I asked to be one of them, and they refused me. If I stay here I shall have to overthrow them and make myself king. The nobles would never consent to that; I have sounded the ground and the time has not yet come. I should be alone. I must dazzle the people. We will go to Egypt, Bourrienne."

Therefore it was not to communicate with Tippoo-Sahib across Asia, and to attack England in India, that Bonaparte left Europe.

"I must dazzle the people." In those words lay the true motive for his departure.

On the 3d of May, 1798, he ordered all the generals to embark their troops. On the 4th he left Paris. On the 8th he reached Toulon. On the 19th he went aboard the admiral's vessel, the "Orient." On the 25th he sighted Leghorn and the island of Elba. On the 13th of June he took Malta. On the 19th he set sail again. On the 3d of July he took Alexandria by assault. On the 13th he won the battle of Chebrouïss. On the 21st he crushed the Mamelukes at the Pyramids. On the 25th he entered Cairo. On the 14th of August he learned of the disaster of Aboukir. On the 24th of December he started, with the members of the Institute, to visit the remains of the Suez Canal. On the 28th he drank at the fountains of Moses, and, like Pharaoh, was almost drowned in the Red Sea. On the 1st of January, 1799, he planned the expedition into Syria. He had conceived the idea six months earlier.

At that time he wrote to Kléber:

If the English continue to overrun the Mediterranean, they will perhaps force us to do greater things than we at first intended.

There was a vague rumor concerning an expedition which the Sultan of Damascus was sending against the French, in which Djezzar Pasha, surnamed "The Butcher," because of his cruelty, led the advance-guard.

The rumor had taken definite shape. Djezzar had advanced by Gaza as far as El-Arich, and had massacred the few French soldiers who were there in the fortress.

Among his young ordnance officers, Bonaparte had the brothers Mailly de Château-Renaud. He sent the younger with a flag of truce to Djezzar, who, in defiance of military law, took him prisoner. This was a declaration of war. Bonaparte, with his customary rapidity of decision, determined to destroy the advance-guard of the Ottoman Empire.

In case of success, he himself would tell later what were his hopes. If repulsed, he would raze the walls of Gaza, Jaffa, and Acre, ravage the country and destroy all the supplies, making it impossible for an army, even a native one, to cross the desert.

On the 11th of February, 1799, Bonaparte entered Syria at the head of twelve thousand men. He had with him that galaxy of gallant men who gravitated around him during the first and most brilliant part of his life.

He had Kléber, the handsomest and bravest horseman in the army. He had Murat, who disputed this double title with Kléber. He had Junot, who was such a remarkable shot that he could split a dozen balls in succession on the point of a knife. He had Lannes, who had already earned his title of Duc de Montebello, but had not yet assumed it. He had Reynier, who was destined to decide the victory of Heliopolis. He had Caffarelli, who was doomed to lie in that trench which he had dug.

And in subordinate positions he had for aides-de-camp Eugene de Beauharnais, our young friend of Strasbourg, who had brought about the marriage between Josephine and Bonaparte by going to ask the latter for his father's sword. He had Croisier, gloomy and taciturn ever since he had faltered in an encounter with the Arabs and the word "coward" had escaped Bonaparte's lips. He had the elder of the two Maillys, who was determined to deliver or avenge his brother. He had the young Sheik of Aher, chief of the Druses, whose name, if not his power, extended from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean.

And, finally, he had an old acquaintance of ours, Roland de Montrevel, whose habitual intrepidity had, since the day of his capture at Cairo, been doubled by that strange desire for death which we have seen him display in "The Companions of Jehu."

On the 17th of February the army reached El-Arich. The soldiers had suffered greatly from thirst during the journey. Only once did they find refreshment and amusement at the end of their day's stage. That was at Messoudiah, or "The Fortunate Spot," on the shores of the Mediterranean, at a place composed of small dunes of fine sand. Here chance led a soldier to imitate Moses' miracle. As he thrust his stick into the ground, the water gushed forth as from an artesian well. The soldier tasted it, and finding it excellent, he called his comrades and shared his discovery with them. Every one then punched his own hole and had his own well. Nothing more was needed to restore the soldiers to cheerfulness.

El-Arich surrendered at the first summons. On the 28th of February the green and fertile plains of Syria came in sight. At the same time, mountains and valleys, recalling those of Europe, could be plainly discerned through a light rain—a rare thing in the East.

On the 1st of March they camped at Ramleh—the ancient Rama, where Rachel gave way to her great despair, which the Bible describes in this nobly pathetic verse:

In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentations and weepings and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not.

Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and Joseph passed by Rama on their way to Egypt. The church which the monks gave Bonaparte for a hospital was built on the very spot where the holy family stopped to rest.

The well whose fresh, pure water slaked the thirst of the whole army was the very same which, seventeen hundred and ninety-nine years before, had refreshed the holy fugitives. He also was from Rama, that disciple Joseph, whose pious hand wrapped the body of our Lord Jesus Christ in the shroud.

Perhaps not one man in the whole vast multitude knew the sacred tradition. But one thing they did know, and that was that they were not more than eighteen miles from Jerusalem.

As they walked beneath the olive trees which are perhaps the most beautiful in all the East, and which the soldiers ruthlessly cut down to make their bivouac fires, Bourrienne asked Bonaparte: "General, shall you not go to Jerusalem?"

"Oh, no," he replied, carelessly; "Jerusalem is not within my line of operations. I do not care to get into trouble with the mountaineers on these bad roads; and then on the other side of the mountain I should be attacked by a large body of cavalry. I have no ambition to emulate the fate of Crassus."

Crassus, it will be remembered, was massacred by the Parthians.

There is this that is strange in Bonaparte's life, that while he was at one time within eighteen miles of Jerusalem (the cradle of Christ) and at another within eighteen miles of Rome (the cradle of the Papacy), he had no desire to see either Rome or Jerusalem.

CHAPTER II

THE PRISONERS

Two days before, within a mile of Gaza (which means in Arabic "treasure" and in Hebrew "strong")—the same Gaza whose gates were carried away by Samson, who died with three thousand Philistines beneath the ruins of the temple which he had overthrown—they had met Abdallah, Pasha of Damascus.

He was at the head of his cavalry. That pertained to Murat's department. Murat took a hundred men from the thousand which he commanded, and with his riding-whip in his hand—for when opposed to the Mussulman, Arab, and Maugrabin cavalry he rarely deigned to draw his sabre—he charged them vigorously. Abdallah turned and fled toward the town. The army followed him and took up its position on the opposite side.

They arrived at Ramleh the day after this skirmish. From Ramleh they marched upon Jaffa. To the soldiers' great satisfaction, the clouds gathered above their heads for the second time, and the rain fell. A deputation was sent to Bonaparte in the name of the army, asking that they be allowed to take a bath. Bonaparte granted the permission and ordered a halt. Then each soldier pulled off his clothes and revelled in the luxury of feeling the cool rain upon his burning body. Then the army started again, refreshed and joyous, and singing the "Marseillaise" with one accord.

Abdallah's Mamelukes and cavalry no more dared wait for the French than they had dared wait at Gaza. They returned to their city firm in their belief that every Mussulman is safe so long as he is behind a wall. This garrison of Jaffa was composed of a singular medley, who, drunk with fanaticism, were now about to set the best army in the world at defiance.

There were representatives there from all parts of the East—from the extreme end of Africa to the uttermost confines of Asia. There were Maugrabins with their long white coats. There were Albanians, with their long guns mounted in silver and inlaid with coral. There were Kurds, with their long lances ornamented with ostrich plumes. There were Aleppians, who all wore, either on one cheek or the other, the mark of the famous button of Aleppo. There were men of Damascus with curved swords of such finely tempered steel that they could cut a silk handkerchief floating in the air. There were Nataloians, Karamanians, and negroes.

On the 3d they arrived before the walls of Jaffa, and on the 4th the city was invested. On the same day Murat made a reconnoissance around the ramparts to determine on which side it would be best to attack. On the 7th everything was in readiness to bombard the city.

Bonaparte desired to try conciliatory measures before beginning the bombardment. He knew the meaning of a struggle against such a population, even were he victorious.

He dictated the following summons:

God is merciful and pitiful.

General Bonaparte, whom the Arabs have surnamed the "Sultan of Fire," charges me to tell you that Djezzar Pasha commenced hostilities in Egypt by taking the fortress of El-Arich; that God, who is always on the side of justice, gave the victory to the French army, who recaptured the fortress, from which he desires to drive the troops of Djezzar Pasha, who ought never to have entered it; that Jaffa is surrounded on all sides; that the batteries will begin in two hours to batter down the walls with shot and shell, and destroy the defences; that his heart is touched by the thought of the harm that would befall the city and its inhabitants should it be taken by assault; that he offers a safe-conduct and protection to the garrison and the inhabitants of the city, and that he will consequently postpone the bombardment until seven o'clock in the morning.

The summons was addressed to Abou-Saib, the governor of Jaffa. Roland held out his hand to take it.

"What are you doing?" asked Bonaparte.

"Do you not need a messenger?" replied the young man, laughing; "it may as well be I as any one else."

"No," replied Bonaparte; "on the contrary, it had better be any one else than you, and better a Mussulman than a Christian."

"Why so, general?"

"Because while Abou-Saib may perhaps cut off the head of a Mussulman, he would most certainly cut off that of a Christian."

"All the more reason," replied Roland, shrugging his shoulders.

"Enough," said Bonaparte: "I do not wish it."

Roland went off into a corner pouting like a spoiled child.

Then Bonaparte said to his dragoman: "Ask whether there is any Turk or Arab, in short any Mussulman, who will undertake to deliver this despatch."

The dragoman repeated the question aloud.

A Mameluke from the dromedary corps came forward.

"I will," said he.

The dragoman looked at Bonaparte.

"Tell him what he risks," said the general-in-chief.

"The Sultan of Fire wishes you to know that you risk your life in taking this message."

"What is written is written," replied the Mussulman, and he held out his hand.

He was given a white flag and a trumpeter. They approached the town on horseback, and the gates opened to receive them. Ten minutes later there was a great commotion on the ramparts just in front of the general's camp. The trumpeter appeared, dragged roughly along by two Albanians. They ordered him to sound his trumpet to attract the attention of the French army.

He sounded the call. Just as all eyes were fixed upon the walls, a man approached holding in his hand a severed head wearing a turban. He extended his arm over the ramparts; the turban fell off, and the head dropped at the foot of the wall. It belonged to the Mussulman who had carried the summons. Ten minutes later the trumpeter came out of the same gate through which he had entered, but he was alone.

The next morning at seven o'clock, as Bonaparte had said, six pieces began to thunder one after the other. At four o'clock the breach was practicable, and Bonaparte ordered the assault. He looked around for Roland to give him the command of one of the regiments which were to enter the breach. Roland was not there.

The carabineers of the twenty-second light brigade and the chasseurs of the same brigade, supported by the artillery and the engineers, rushed forward to the assault, commanded by General Rambeau, Adjutant-general Nethervood, and Vernois. They all mounted to the breach; and in spite of the fusillade which met them in front, and the showers of grape from the few cannon which had not been silenced, and which took them from behind, they waged a terrible fight over the fallen tower.

The struggle lasted for a quarter of an hour, and the besiegers had not been able to enter the breach, nor had the besieged succeeded in forcing them back. All the efforts on both sides seemed to be concentrated on the spot, when suddenly Roland appeared upon the dismantled tower holding a Turkish standard and followed by some fifty men. He waved the standard crying: "The city is taken!"

This is what had happened: That morning about six o'clock, the hour of dawn in the East, Roland had gone down to his bath in the sea, and there had discovered a sort of breach in the angle made by a wall and a tower. He had assured himself that the breach led into the city; then he took his bath and returned to the army just as the bombardment had begun. There, as he was well known to be one of Bonaparte's privileged favorites, and at the same time one of the most recklessly daring officers in the army, cries of "Captain Roland! Captain Roland!" resounded on all sides.

Roland knew what that meant. It meant, "Haven't you something impossible to attempt? Here we are."

"Fifty volunteers!" he cried.

A hundred offered themselves.

"Fifty!" he repeated.

And he selected the fifty, taking every other man in order not to hurt their feelings. Then he took two trumpeters and two drummers, and leading the way himself, he conducted them through the hole he had found into the city. His fifty men

followed him.

They met a party of about one hundred men carrying a flag. They fell upon them and harried them with their bayonets. Roland seized the flag, and it was that one which he had waved from the ramparts. He was hailed by shouts from the whole army; but he thought the time had now come to use his drums and trumpets.

The whole garrison was at the breach, not expecting any rear attack, when they suddenly heard the drums beside them and the French trumpets behind them. At the same time, two discharges of musketry and a hailstorm of bullets fell among the besieged. They turned, only to see gun-barrels reflecting the rays of the sun and tri-colored plumes waving in the wind in every direction. The smoke drifting toward them on the sea-breeze concealed the small number of the French rear attacking party. They believed that they had been betrayed. A frightful panic ensued, and they deserted the breach.

But Roland had sent ten of his men to open one of the gates. General Lannes's division poured in, and the besieged found French bayonets where they had thought to find the road clear for flight. By a reaction common to ferocious people, who, never giving quarter, never expect any, they seized their arms with renewed fury, and the combat began again with all the appearance of a massacre. Bonaparte, being ignorant of what was happening within the walls—seeing the smoke rising along the ramparts and hearing the rattle of musketry, while no one returned, not even the wounded—sent Eugene de Beauharnais and Croisier to see what was going on, bidding them to return and report at once.

They both wore the emblem of their rank, the aide-de-camp's scarf, on their arm. They had been impatiently awaiting the word which would permit of their taking part in the fight. They entered the town at a run and penetrated to the very heart of the carnage. They were recognized as envoys of the commander-in-chief, and as they were supposed to be the bearers of a message the firing ceased for a minute. A few of the Albanians could speak French. One of them cried: "If our lives are spared we will surrender at once. If not, we will fight until the last one of us is killed."

The two aides-de-camp had no means of knowing Bonaparte's secrets. They were young and they were actuated by sentiments of humanity. Without authority they promised the poor fellows that their lives should be spared. The firing ceased, and the prisoners were taken to the camp. There were four thousand of them.

As for the soldiers, they knew their rights. The town had been taken by assault. After the massacre came the pillage.

CHAPTER III

THE CARNAGE

Bonaparte was walking in front of his tent with Bourrienne, impatiently awaiting news, and having no other of his intimates at hand, when he saw two troops of armed men leaving the town by different gates. One of them was led by Croisier, and the other by Eugene de Beauharnais. Their young faces shone with joy.

Croisier, who had not smiled since he had had the misfortune to displease the commander-in-chief, was smiling now, for he hoped that this fine prize would conciliate the master. Bonaparte understood the whole thing. He grew pale, and said sorrowfully: "What do you suppose I am going to do with those men? Have I food to give them? Have I ships to send the wretched creatures to France or Egypt?"

The two young men halted ten feet from him. They saw by the rigid expression of his face that they had made a mistake.

"What have you there?" he asked.

Croisier dared not reply, but Eugene spoke for both.

"As you see, general, prisoners."

"Did I tell you to take any prisoners?"

"You told us to stop the carnage," replied Eugene, timidly.

"Yes," replied the general, "of women, children, and old men I did; but not of armed soldiers. Do you know that you have forced me to commit a crime?"

The young men understood and retired in dismay. Croisier was weeping. Eugene tried to console him; but he shook his head and said: "It is all over with me; the first opportunity that offers I shall let myself be shot."

Before deciding upon the fate of the unfortunate prisoners, Bonaparte decided to call a council of the generals. But soldiers and generals had bivouacked outside the town. The soldiers did not stop until they were weary. Besides the four thousand prisoners, they left nearly five thousand dead. The pillage of the houses lasted all night. From time to time shots echoed through the night. Dull cries of anguish resounded incessantly in the streets, the houses, and the mosques.

They came from soldiers who were dragged from their places of concealment and slaughtered; by inhabitants who were trying to defend their treasures; by husbands and fathers who were striving to defend their wives and daughters from the brutality of the soldiers.

But the vengeance of Heaven was hidden beneath all this cruelty. The plague was in Jaffa, and the army carried the germs of it away with them.

The prisoners were, in the first place, ordered to sit down together in front of the tents. Their hands were tied behind their backs. Their faces were downcast, more from dread of what was in store for them than from anger. They had seen Bonaparte's face darken when he perceived them; and they had heard, although they had not understood it, the reprimand which he had bestowed upon the young soldiers. But what they had not understood they had divined.

Some of them ventured to say, "I am hungry"; others, "I am thirsty."

They brought them all water and gave each of them a piece of bread, taken from the soldiers' rations. This reassured them a trifle.

As fast as the generals returned they were bidden to repair at once to the general-in-chief's tent. They deliberated a long time without arriving at any decision. On the following day the diurnal reports of the generals of division came in. All complained of insufficient rations. The only ones who had eaten and drunk their fill were those who had entered the town during the fight and were therefore entitled to take part in the pillage. But they constituted merely a fourth of the army. All the rest complained at having to share their bread with the enemy, who had been rescued from legitimate vengeance; since, according to the laws of war, Jaffa having been taken by storm, all the soldiers who were within its walls should have perished by the sword.

The council assembled once more. Five questions were proposed for its deliberation.

"Should the men be sent to Egypt?"

But this would require a large escort, and the army was already over-weak to defend itself against the deadly hostility of the country. Besides that, how could they and their escort be fed until they reached Cairo, when they would be obliged to travel through the enemy's country, previously laid waste by the army which had just passed through it and which had no food to give the prisoners to start with.

"Should they put them on shipboard?"

Where were the ships? Where could they be found? The sea was like a desert, or at least it was dotted by no friendly sails.

"Should they be restored to liberty?"

In that case they would go straight to Saint-Jean-d'Acre, to reinforce the Pasha, or else into the mountains of Nablos. Then in every ravine they would be assailed by an invisible army of sharpshooters.

"Should they incorporate them, disarmed as they were, in the Republican army?"

But the provisions, already scanty for ten thousand men, would be still more inadequate for fourteen thousand. Then they ran great danger from such comrades in a hostile country. At the first opportunity they would deal out death for the life which had been left them. What is a dog of a Christian to a Turk? Is it not a pious and meritorious act in the eyes of the Prophet to deal death to the infidel?

Bonaparte rose as they were about to propose the fifth condition.

"Let us wait until to-morrow," he said.

He himself could not have told what he expected to gain by waiting. It was for one of those strange chances, which sometimes prevent a great crime, and which, when they intervene, are called the interposition of Providence.

He waited in vain. On the fourth day, the question, which they had not dared to ask had to be confronted:

"Should the prisoners be shot?"

The murmurs were increasing, and the evil was growing. The soldiers might at any moment throw themselves upon the prisoners, and thus lend an appearance of revolt and assassination to that which was in reality an outcome of the necessities of the case.

The sentence was unanimous, with the exception of a single vote. One of those present did not vote at all. The unfortunates were to be shot.

Bonaparte hastened from his tent and gazed searchingly out to sea. A tempest of human emotions was surging in his breast. He had not at that period acquired the stoicism born of numerous battlefields. The man who later looked upon Austerlitz, Eylau, and Moscow without moving a muscle, was not sufficiently familiarized with death to throw such prey to him at one fell swoop without a tremor of remorse. On the vessel which had conveyed him to Egypt his pity and compassion had astonished everybody. During such a journey it was impossible to avoid occasional accidents, or that some men should not fall overboard. This accident occurred several times during the crossing on board the "Orient." At such times only was it possible to compass all the human feeling in Bonaparte's heart.

As soon as he heard the cry, "Man overboard!" he would dart up on deck if he were not already there and order a boat to be lowered. From that moment he would not rest until the man was found and saved. Bourrienne had orders to reward with great liberality the men who had undertaken the task of rescue, and if there were among them a sailor who deserved punishment for neglect of duty, he pardoned him and rewarded him with money besides.

One dark night the splash of a body falling into the water was heard. Bonaparte as usual rushed from his cabin to the deck, and ordered a boat to be lowered. The sailors, who knew that not only were they doing a good deed, but that they would be rewarded for it afterward, threw themselves into the boat with their customary activity and zeal. After five minutes of ceaseless questioning on Bonaparte's part, "Has the man been saved?" he was rewarded with a shout of laughter.

The man who had fallen into the water was a quarter of beef from the store-room.

"Double the reward, Bourrienne," said Bonaparte; "it might have been a man, and the next time they might think it was merely a quarter of beef."

The order for this execution must emanate from him. He delayed giving it, and the time was passing. Finally he called for

his horse, leaped into his saddle, took an escort of twenty men, and rode away, crying: "Do it!"

He dared not say, "Fire!"

A scene like that which ensued cannot be described.

Those great massacres which occurred during the course of antiquity have no place in modern history. Out of the four thousand a few escaped, because, having thrown themselves into the water, they were able to swim out to some reefs where they were beyond the range of the musketry.

Neither Eugene de Beauharnais nor Croisier dared show themselves before Bonaparte until they reached Saint-Jean-d'Acre and were compelled to take their orders from him.

The French were encamped before Saint-Jean-d'Acre on the 18th. In spite of the English frigates lying in the harbor, some of the young officers, among them the Sheik of Aher, Roland and the Comte de Mailly, asked permission to go and bathe in the roadstead. The permission was accorded.

When they were diving De Mailly found a leather sack, which was floating under water. The bathers were curious to know what it contained and swam with it to the bank. It was tied up with a cord, and apparently concealed a human body.

The cord was untied, the sack opened, and Mailly recognized the head and body of his brother, who had been sent a month before with a flag of truce to Djazzar Pasha, who had beheaded him when he perceived the dust made by the advance-guard of the French.



CHAPTER IV

FROM ANCIENT DAYS TO OUR OWN

Since it is our good fortune to have readers sufficiently intelligent to encourage us to write a book in which romance is relegated to the second place, we shall doubtless be permitted to detail not only the modern, but also the ancient history of the places which we visit with our heroes. There is much charm for the poet, the historian, even the dreamer, in treading upon soil composed of the ashes of past generations; and nowhere more than in the region we are now treading do we find traces of those great historical catastrophes which, becoming less substantial and fainter in outline as the years roll past, finally disappear like ruins and the spectres of ruins amid the ever-thickening shadows of the past.

This is true of the city which we have just left, throbbing with shrieks of anguish, overflowing with carnage and blood, with its walls battered to pieces and its houses in flames. The rapid movement of our narrative, and our desire to enter modern Jaffa with our young conqueror, have hitherto prevented us from telling you what manner of place was the Jaffa of olden days.

Jaffa in Hebrew signifies beauty. Joppa in Phœnician means height.

Jaffa is to the eastern gulf of the Mediterranean what Jiddah is to the Red Sea. It is the city of pilgrims. Every Christian pilgrim on his way to visit the tomb of Christ takes in Jaffa on the road. Every Mussulman *hadji* who goes to Mecca to visit the Prophet's tomb takes in Jiddah on his way.

When we read the great works of to-day on Egypt—works in which the most learned men of the day have united their efforts—we are astonished to find so few of these luminous points which, placed in the dark night of the past, illuminate and attract the traveller like beacons.

We are about to attempt what they have neglected to do.

The author who assigns to Jaffa (the Joppa of the Phœnicians) the most ancient place in history is Pomponius Mela, who affirms that it was built before the deluge.

Est Joppe ante diluvium condita.

And Joppa must have built before the deluge, since the historian Josephus, in his "Antiquities," says, with Berosius and Nicolas of Damascus, not exactly that the Ark was built at Joppa—for that would be in contradiction with the Bible—but that it stopped there. They assure us that in their time fragments of it were still shown to incredulous travellers, and that they used as a remedy, which was efficacious in all cases as a universal panacea, the dust of the tar which was used to coat the Ark.

It was at Joppa, if we may believe Pliny, that Andromeda was chained to the rocks, to be devoured by the sea-monster; there she was delivered by Perseus, mounted on the Chimera and armed with the head of Medusa, which turned the beholder into stone.

Pliny affirms that during the reign of Adrian the holes through which Andromeda's chain had been passed were still visible; and Saint Jerome—a witness who cannot be accused of partiality—declares that he saw them.

The skeleton of the sea-monster, forty feet long, was thought by some of the people of Joppa to be that of the divinity Ceto. The water of the fountain in which Perseus bathed after killing the monster was ever afterward tinged with his blood. Pausanias tells us so, and declares that he saw the rose-tinged water with his own eyes. Ceto, a goddess of whom Pliny speaks (*colitur fabulosa Ceto*), and who is called Derceto by historians, was the name which tradition gave to the unknown mother of Semiramis.

Diodorus relates the pretty fable of the unknown mother with the quaint charm which makes poetry of this fable without robbing it of its sensuousness.

"There is," he says, "in Syria a city called Ascalon, overlooking a deep lake in which fish abound, and near it is a temple dedicated to the celebrated goddess whom the Syrians call Derceto.

"She has a head and a face like a woman's; all the rest of the body is that of a fish. The learned men of the nation say that Venus, having been offended by Derceto, inspired her with a passion for a young priest as intense as that which she had awakened in Phedrus and Sappho. Derceto had a daughter by him; but she repented so bitterly of her fault that she caused

the youth to disappear, abandoned the infant in a desert place full of rocks, and threw herself into the lake, where her body was transformed into that of a siren. For this reason the Syrians worship the fish as gods, and abstain from eating them.

"But the little girl was saved and fed by doves, who came in great numbers and made their nests among the rocks where she had been left to die.

"A shepherd found her and brought her up with as much care as if she had been his own daughter, and named her Semiramis, or 'the daughter of the doves.'"

If we may believe Diodorus, it is to this daughter of the doves, the haughty Semiramis, the wife and murderess of Ninus, who fortified Babylon and laid out those magnificent gardens, the envy and the admiration of the ancient world, that the Orientals owe the splendid costume which they wear to this day. When she had reached the height of her power, having conquered Egyptian Arabia, a part of Ethiopia, Libya, and all Asia as far as the Indus, she felt the need of inventing a costume for her travels which should be at once convenient and elegant, in which she could not only perform the ordinary duties of life, but also ride horseback and fight. This costume was adopted by all the people whom she conquered.

"She was so beautiful," says Valerius Maximus, "that one day when an insurrection broke out in her capital, just as she was at her toilet, she had only to show herself, half naked and with her hair unbound, to restore order."

Perhaps we may find the reason for Venus' hatred of Derceto in Higinus.

"The Syrian goddess who was worshipped at Hierapolis," he says, "was Venus. An egg fell from heaven into the Euphrates; the fishes brought it to the bank, where it was hatched by a dove. Venus issued from it, and became the goddess of the Syrians, while Jupiter, at her request, placed the fishes in the sky; and she in gratitude harnessed her nurses to her chariot."

The famous temple of Dagon, where the statue of the god was found overturned before the Ark with both hands broken, was situated in the city of Azoth, between Joppa and Ascalon.

Read the Bible, that great treasure-house of history and poetry, and you will see that the cedars of Lebanon, brought for the building of the Temple of Solomon, came from the gates of Joppa. You will see that the prophet Jonah came to the gates of Joppa to embark for Tarsus when he was flying from the face of the Lord.

Then, passing from the Bible to Josephus, whose writings may be called the continuation of it, you will see that Judas Maccabeus, to avenge his two hundred brethren who had been treacherously slain by the inhabitants, came with sword and firebrand and set fire to the ships anchored in the port, and put to death with the sword all who had escaped the fire.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles as follows:

There was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did.

And it came to pass in those days that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed they laid her in an upper chamber.

And for as much as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

Then Peter arose and went to them, when he was come, they brought him to the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats which Dorcas had made when she was with them.

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed; and turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, arise!" And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

And he gave her his hand and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows he presented her alive.

And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

And it came to pass that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon, a tanner.

It was there that the servants of the centurion Cornelius found him when they came to beg him to go to Cesarea. It was in Simon's house that he had the vision bidding him carry the Gospel to the Gentiles.

At the time of the rising of the Jews against Rome, Sextus besieged Joppa, took it by storm and burned it. Eight thousand of the inhabitants perished; but it was soon rebuilt. As the new city was constantly sending forth pirates, who infested the coasts of Syria and made expeditions as far as Greece and even Egypt, the Emperor Vespasian took it again, razed it to the ground from the first to the last house, and built a fortress on its site.

But in his Jewish wars, Josephus relates that a new city soon sprang up at the foot of the fortress of Vespasian, which became the seat of a bishopric, or rather of a bishop, from the reign of Constantine, A.D. 330, until the invasion of the Arabs in 636. This bishopric was established during the First Crusade, and made subject to the metropolitan See of Cesarea. Finally it was converted into a county, and embellished and fortified by Baldwin I., Emperor of Constantinople.

Saint Louis also came to Joppa; and Joinville, his ingenuous historian, tells of the sojourn which he made with the Comte de Japhe, as the good chevalier Frenchifies the name.

This Comte de Japhe, who was Gautier de Brienne, did his best to clean and whitewash the city, which was in such a deplorable state that Saint Louis was ashamed of it, and took it upon himself to build its walls and beautify its churches. Saint Louis received the news of his mother's death while there.

"When the sainted king," writes Joinville, "saw the archbishop of Tyre and his confessor entering his apartments with expressions of sorrow, he asked them to go with him to his chapel, which was his refuge from all the ills of the world.

"Then when he had heard the fatal news, he fell upon his knees, and with clasped hands he exclaimed, weeping: 'I thank thee, O God, that thou didst lend my mother to me, while it seemed best to thee, and for that, in thy good pleasure, thou hast taken her again to thee. It is true that I loved her above all other creatures, and she deserved it; but since thou hast taken her from me, may thy holy name be blessed for evermore.'"

The works erected by Saint Louis were destroyed in 1268 by the Pasha of Egypt, Bibas, who levelled the citadel to the ground, and sent the wood and precious marbles of it which it was composed to Cairo to build his mosque.

Finally, when Monconys visited Palestine, he found at Jaffa only a castle and three caves hollowed out of a rock. We have told of its condition when Bonaparte entered it, and in what state he left it.

We shall return once more to this town, which to Bonaparte was neither Jaffa the Beautiful, nor Jaffa the Lofty, but Jaffa the Fatal.

CHAPTER V

SIDNEY SMITH

On the 18th, at daybreak, while the army was crossing the little stream of the Kerdaneah, on a bridge thrown over it during the night, Bonaparte, accompanied only by Roland de Montrevel, the Sheik of Aher, and the Comte de Mailly, whom he was utterly unable to reconcile to his brother's death, do what he would, ascended a little hill not far from the town to which he had laid siege.

From its summit he could see the whole country, including not only the two English vessels, "Tiger" and "Theseus," rocking upon the breast of the sea, but also the troops of the Pasha, occupying all the gardens around the city.

"Let all that rabble be dislodged from those gardens," he said, "and driven back into the town."

As he had addressed no one in particular, all three young men started off like three hawks in pursuit of the same prey. But he cried in his harsh voice: "Roland! Sheik of Aher!"

The two young men, when they heard their names, stopped their horses, which were tugging at their bits, and returned to their places beside the commander-in-chief. Mailly went on with a hundred sharpshooters, a like number of grenadiers and voltigeurs, and spurring his horse to a gallop, charged at their head.

Bonaparte had great confidence in the omens of war. It was for that reason that he had been so greatly displeased with Croisier's hesitation during their first engagement with the Bedouins, and had reproached him so bitterly for it.

He could see the movements of the troops through his glass, which was an excellent one, from where he stood. He saw Eugene de Beauharnais and Croisier, who had not dared to speak to him since that unfortunate day at Jaffa, take command, the former of the grenadiers and the latter of the sharpshooters, while Mailly, with the utmost deference to his companions, led the voltigeurs.

If the commander-in-chief was looking for a ready omen he should have been content. While Roland was impatiently gnawing at his silver mounted riding-whip, and the Sheik of Aher on the contrary was watching the fray with all the patience and calmness of an Arab, Bonaparte saw the three detachments pass through the ruins of a village, a Turkish cemetery, and a little wood whose freshness plainly showed that it was watered by a spring, and hurl themselves upon the enemy in spite of the brisk firing of the Arnauts and the Albanians, whom he recognized by their magnificent gold embroidered costumes and their long silver-mounted rifles, and rout them at the first charge.

The firing on the French side began vigorously, and continued with increasing vigor, while above it they could hear the loud explosion of the hand-grenades, which the French soldiers threw with their hands, and with which they tormented the fugitives.

They all arrived about the same time at the foot of the ramparts; but the posterns being closed behind the Mussulmans, and the walls being enveloped with a girdle of fire, the three hundred Frenchmen were forced to beat a retreat, after having killed about one hundred and fifty of the enemy.

The three young men had displayed marvellous gallantry, and had performed prodigies of valor in their emulation of each other.

Eugene had killed an Arnaut, who was a head taller than he, in a hand-to-hand encounter; Mailly had approached within ten paces of a group which was making a stand, had discharged both barrels of his pistol at them, and had then rejoined his own men with a single bound. Croisier, for his part, had sabred two Arabs who had attacked him at the same time, cutting open the head of one of them and breaking the blade of his sabre in the breast of the second, and had returned with the bloody hilt dangling from his wrist.

Bonaparte turned to the Sheik of Aher and said: "Give me your sword in exchange for mine." And he detached his own sword from his belt and handed it to the Sheik.

The latter kissed the hilt, and hastily handed him his own.

"Roland," said Bonaparte, "go and present my compliments to Eugene and De Mailly; as for Croisier, you will simply say to him: 'Here is a sword which the commander-in-chief has sent you. He has been watching you.'"

Roland set off at a gallop. The young men to whom Bonaparte had sent these congratulations leaped in their saddles for

joy, and embraced each other. Croisier, like the Sheik of Aher, kissed the hilt of the sword which had been sent him, threw away the scabbard and broken hilt of the old one, and put the one Bonaparte had given him at his belt, saying: "Thank the commander-in-chief for me, and say to him that he will have reason to be satisfied with me at the first assault."

The entire army had gradually ascended the hill where Bonaparte was stationed like an equestrian statue. The soldiers shouted with delight when they saw their comrades drive the Maugrabins before them as the wind scatters the sand of the sea. Like Bonaparte, the army could see no great difference between the fortifications of Saint-Jean d'Acre and those of Jaffa; and, like Bonaparte, they did not doubt that the city would be taken at the second or third assault.

The French were ignorant that there were two men within the walls of Saint-Jean d'Acre who were worth more in themselves than a whole army of Mussulmans.

They were Sidney Smith, the English Admiral who commanded the "Tiger" and the "Theseus," which were gracefully cradled on the waters of the Gulf of Carmel, and Colonel Phélippeaux, who had charge of the defensive works and the fortress of Djézzar the Butcher. Phélippeaux had been Bonaparte's friend and schoolfellow at Brienne, his rival at college and in his mathematical successes. Fortune, chance, or accident had now cast his lot among Bonaparte's foes.

Sidney Smith, whom the exiles of the 18th Fructidor had met at the Temple, had by a strange freak of fate escaped from his prison and reached London, where he resumed his place in the English army just at the time of Bonaparte's departure from Toulon.

It was Phélippeaux who had undertaken the rescue of Sidney Smith, and he had succeeded in his daring enterprise. False orders had been prepared, under the pretext of removing the captive from one prison to another. A stamped fac-simile of the minister of police's signature had been obtained at a heavy price. From whom? From him perhaps; who knows?

Under the name of Loger, and attired in an adjutant-general's uniform, Sidney Smith's friend had presented himself at the prison and exhibited his false order to the clerk. He examined it closely, and was forced to admit that it was correct in every particular. But he said: "You will need a guard of at least six men for a prisoner of such importance."

The pretended adjutant-general said: "For a man of such importance I shall need only his word." Then, turning to the prisoner, he added: "Commodore, you are a military man as well as I; your parole, that you will not seek to escape, will suffice for me. If you will give it I shall need no escort."

And Sidney Smith, like the honorable Englishman that he was, would not lie even to escape. He replied: "Sir, if it will satisfy you, I will promise to follow you wherever you may go."

And Adjutant-general Loger escorted Sidney Smith to England. These two men were now turned loose upon Bonaparte.

Phélippeaux undertook the defence of the fortress as we have said; Sidney Smith was to provide the arms and the soldiers.

And there, where Bonaparte expected to find only a stupid Turk in command, as at Gaza and Jaffa, he found all the science of a compatriot, and all the hatred of an Englishman.

That same evening Bonaparte ordered Sanson, the chief of the engineering brigade, to reconnoitre the counterscarp. The latter waited until it was very dark. It was a moonless night well suited to such operations. He set out alone, traversed the ruined village, and the gardens from which the Arabs had been dislodged and driven in the morning. Seeing a black mass ahead which could be nothing else than the fortress, he got down on his hands and knees to feel the ground step by step. Just as he discovered a more rapid angle which made him believe that the moat was without facing, he was discovered by a sentinel whose eyes were probably accustomed to the darkness, or who in common with other men shared that propensity of the animals which enables them to see in the dark.

His cry "Who goes there?" rang out in the darkness.

Sanson did not reply. The cry was repeated a second, then a third time; a shot followed, and the ball shattered the outstretched hand of the general of the engineers. In spite of his terrible sufferings the officer made no sound; he crawled back again, thinking that he had studied the moat sufficiently, and made his report to Bonaparte.

The trench was begun on the following day. They took advantage of the gardens which were the ancient moats of Ptolemais, whose history we will relate later, as we did that of Jaffa.

They used an aqueduct which crossed the glacis, and in ignorance of the fatal support which Djézzar possessed to the

undoing of the French, they gave the trench but three feet of depth.

When the giant Kléber saw the trench he shrugged his shoulders and said to Bonaparte: "That is a fine trench, general: it will scarcely reach to my knees."

On the 23d of March Sidney Smith captured the two large vessels which were bringing Bonaparte his heavy artillery and the army its supplies. The French watched this capture without being able to prevent it, and found themselves in the strange position of besiegers being fought with their own weapons.

On the 25th they made a breach and attempted an assault, but were stopped by the counterscarp and the ditch.

On the 26th of March, the besieged, led by no less a personage than Djézzar Pasha himself, attempted a sortie to destroy the works which had already been begun. But being charged with the bayonet, they were at once repulsed and were obliged to retreat within the gates of the city.

Although the French battery consisted of only four twelve-pounders, eight eight-pounders and four howitzers, this feeble battery was unmasked on the 28th, and made a breach in the tower against which the principal attack was directed. Although of heavier calibre than those of the French, Djézzar's cannon were silenced by the enemy, and the towers offered a practicable breach at three o'clock in the afternoon.

A cry of joy burst from the French when they saw the wall crumble and caught a glimpse of the interior. The grenadiers, who had been the first to enter Jaffa, excited by the memory, and thinking that it would be no more difficult to take Acre than it had been to take Jaffa, asked with one accord to be allowed to enter the breach.

Bonaparte had been in the trench with his staff ever since the morning; yet he hesitated to give the order for the assault. However, egged on by Captain Mailly, who told him that he could no longer restrain the grenadiers, Bonaparte decided, and, in spite of himself, the words escaped him: "Well, go then!"

The grenadiers of the sixty-ninth brigade, led by Mailly, dashed at once into the breach; but to their great astonishment where they had expected to find the slope of the moat, they found an escarpment twelve feet high. Then came the cry, "Ladders! Ladders!"

Ladders were thrown into the breach, the grenadiers leaped from the top of the counterscarp down to them, and Mailly seized the first ladder and threw it into the breach; twenty more were at once placed beside the first one.

But the breach was filled with Arnauts and Albanians, who fired at close range, and even rolled down stones upon their assailants. Half the ladders were broken, and in falling carried down those who had mounted upon them. Mailly was severely wounded and fell from the top to the bottom of his. The fire of the besieged was redoubled; the grenadiers were obliged to retreat, and to use the ladders with which they had hoped to scale the breach to climb up the counterscarp again.

Mailly, who was wounded in the foot and could not walk, begged his soldiers to take him with them. One of them put him on his shoulders, and fell with a bullet through the head a moment later. A second took up the wounded man and carried him to the foot of a ladder where he fell with a broken thigh. Eager to put themselves in safety, they abandoned him, and they could hear his voice crying, while no one stopped to reply to him: "At least make an end of me with a bullet, if you cannot save me."

Poor Mailly had not long to suffer. The moats were no sooner evacuated by the French soldiers than the Turks swarmed down into them, and cut off the heads of all who were left.

Djézzar thought to bestow a suitable gift upon Sidney Smith; he had all these heads put in a sack and sent to the English commodore. Sidney Smith merely looked sadly at the ghastly trophy and said: "This is what it means to be allied with barbarians."

CHAPTER VI

PTOLEMAIS

However indifferent Bonaparte was in regard to Jerusalem, having passed within twenty miles of it without tarrying to visit it, he was none the less interested in the ground on which he stood. Being unable, or not having cared to do as Alexander did at the time of his conquest of India, to go out of his way to visit the high-priest of Jerusalem, he regarded it as some compensation to stand upon the ancient site of Ptolemais, and to set up his tent where Richard Cœur-de-Lion and Philippe-Auguste had set up theirs.

Far from being indifferent to his historical surroundings, his heart rejoiced in it; and he had chosen the little hill where he had watched the fight on the first day as his headquarters, confident that the heroes who had preceded him had placed their banners on the same spot.

But he, the first of the leaders of political crusades, following the banner of his own fortune and leaving behind him all the religious beliefs which had led millions of men to the same place, from Godfrey de Bouillon to Saint Louis—he, on the contrary, brought in his train the science of the eighteenth century, of Volney and Dupuis; or, in other words, scepticism.

While caring little for Christian traditions, he was on the other hand deeply interested in historical legends.

The very evening of the unfortunate assault in which poor Mailly had perished by the same death as his brother, he assembled his officers and generals in his tent, and ordered Bourrienne to take the few books which composed his library from the boxes. Unfortunately it contained but few historical works relating to Syria. He had only Plutarch, the lives of Cicero, Pompey, Alexander and Antony; and in the way of political literature he had only the Old and New Testaments and a Mythology.

He gave each of the books which we have just named to the most literary of his generals or his young friends, and then called upon the historical reminiscences of the others, which, combined with his own, formed the only information which he could obtain in that desert country. Thus he was but incompletely informed. We who, more fortunate than he, have the literature of the Crusades before our eyes, can raise the veil of centuries for our readers, and give them the history of this little corner of the earth, from the time when it fell to the share of the tribe of Asher in the distribution of the Promised Land, until the day when Richard Cœur-de-Lion endeavored to take it for the third time from the Saracens.

Its old name was Acco, meaning "burning sands," and the Arabs still call it Acca. Made tributary to Egypt by the kings of the Greek dynasty of Ptolemy, who inherited Alexandria upon the death of the conqueror of the Indies, it bore the name of Ptolemais about one hundred and six years before the birth of Christ.

Vespasian, when preparing his expedition against Judea, spent three months at Ptolemais, and held court there for the kings and princes of the adjacent countries.

It was there that Titus saw Berenice, daughter of Agrippa I., and fell in love with her.

But Bonaparte had nothing relating to this period save a tragedy of Racine's, fragments of which he was wont to make Talma declaim with great frequency.

The Acts of the Apostles says: "From Tyre we came to Ptolemais, where our voyage ended, and having saluted our brethren, we abode one day with them." As you know, Saint Paul says that, and it was he who came from Tyre to Ptolemais.

The first siege of Ptolemais by the Crusaders began in 1189. Boah-Eddin, an Arab historian, says, in speaking of the Christians, that they were so numerous that God alone could number them. But on the other hand a Christian author, one Gauthier Ynisau, chronicler of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, assures us that Saladin's army was more numerous than that of Darius.

After the battle of Tiberius (of which we shall have occasion to speak in describing the battle of Mount Tabor), Guy de Lusignan, having escaped from captivity, laid siege to Jerusalem, whose fortifications had just been rebuilt. Strong towers defended it on the seaward coast. One was called the Tower of the Flies, because the pagans offered up their sacrifices there, and the smell of the human flesh attracted the flies. The other was called the Accursed Tower, because, says Gauthier Ynisau in his "Itinerary of King Richard," it was in this tower that the pieces of silver were struck for

which Judas sold Christ.

It was by this very same old "accursed tower" that the Saracens made their way into the city in 1291.

Although he was ignorant of the fact, that was the very tower which Bonaparte had so unsuccessfully attacked. Walter Scott, in one of his best novels, "The Talisman," has related an incident of this famous siege, which lasted two years. The Arab histories, much less well-known than the French, contain some interesting data concerning this siege.

Ibn-Alatir, one of Saladin's physicians, has, among others, left us an interesting account of the Mussulman camp.

"In the midst of the camp (it is Ibn-Alatir who is speaking) was a vast square where the farriers' forges were located. There were one hundred and forty of them. We can judge of the rest of the camp in proportion.

"In a single kitchen there were twenty-nine pots, each one large enough to hold a sheep. I myself counted the number of shops registered as markets. I counted seven thousand. You must know that they are not like our city shops. A shop in a camp would make a hundred of ours. All were well supplied. I have heard that when Saladin changed his camp to retire to Karouba, although the distance was short, that it cost one butter-merchant seventy gold pieces to move his shop. As for the old and new clothes shops, they were something beyond description. There were more than one thousand baths in the camp. They were kept by Africans, and it cost a piece of silver to take a bath.

"The camp of the Christians was like a fortified city. All the trades and all the mechanical arts were represented there."

The markets were supplied with meat, fish and fruits as completely as the capital of a great kingdom could have been. There were even churches with bells there. Therefore it was usually at the hour of mass that the Saracens attacked the camp.

"A poor English priest," says Michaud, "built a chapel dedicated to the dead at his own expense on the plain of Ptolemais. There was a vast plot of consecrated ground around the chapel, whither he followed the remains of more than one hundred thousand pilgrims, chanting their burial service himself. Forty lords of Lubeck and Bremen made tents with the sails of their vessels for the poor soldiers of their country and took care of them in sickness. This was the origin of a celebrated order which still exists under the name of the Teutonic Order."

Whoever has travelled in the East, in Egypt, or to Constantinople, has made the acquaintance of the famous Turkish Punchinello, called Caragous. The exploits of our Punchinello are as nothing when compared to his; and he, the cynic of cynics, would blush at the most innocent jokes of his turbaned colleague.

It was during this siege, in which Richard Cœur-de-Lion and Saladin played such an important part, that the ancestor of the modern Caragous appeared. He was an Emir.

Another historical date, no less important to verify, is that of the first bill of exchange. Emad-Eddin speaks of an ambassador of the Caliph of Bagdad who was the bearer of two loads of naphtha and reeds, and who brought with him five persons skilled in the distillation and the use of naphtha. It is admitted that naphtha and Greek fire are one and the same. Furthermore, this same ambassador brought a note of hand for twenty thousand pieces of gold on the merchants of Bagdad. Thus the bill of exchange and the note of hand are not inventions of modern commerce, as they were used in the East in the year 1191.

It was during this two years' siege that the besieged invented the *Zenbourech*, which the popes afterward forbade the Christians to use. It was a sort of arrow about twelve inches long and four inches thick. It had four sides, an iron point, and a feathered head. Vinisauf relates that this dreadful arrow, thrown by the instrument which was used to shoot it, would at times pass through the bodies of two men armed with shields, and then bury itself in the wall.

It was toward the close of this siege that the great dispute arose which alienated Richard Cœur-de-Lion and Leopold, duke of Austria. Cœur-de-Lion, who sometimes returned from an assault so riddled with arrows that he looked like a pin-cushion, as his historian says, was justly proud of his courage and strength. Leopold, who was equally proud, had his flag hoisted over the city which he had just entered with Richard. Richard might have put his own flag beside that of Duke Leopold, but he preferred to take down the Austrian flag and throw it into a ditch. All the Germans revolted and wished to attack the king in his quarters; but Leopold opposed this.

A year later, as Richard did not wish to return to his domain through France, owing to his differences with Philippe-Auguste, he travelled through Austria in disguise; but he was recognized in spite of it, made prisoner, and incarcerated in the castle of Durenstein. For two years no one knew what had become of him; this thunderbolt of war had been extinguished like a meteor. There were no traces left of Richard Cœur-de-Lion.

A gentleman of Arras named Blondel undertook to find him; and one day, without having the least idea that he was so near the English king, he sat down at the foot of an old castle, and began to sing the first verse of a couplet which he had composed with Richard. Richard, by the way, was a bit of a poet in his leisure moments. When he heard the first verse of this couplet which he and Blondel had composed, he suspected the latter's presence and replied with the second.

The rest of the story, which has furnished Grétry with a theme for his masterpiece, is well known.

Ptolemais surrendered to the Christians, as we have said, after a siege of two years. The garrison were promised their lives on condition that they surrender the True Cross, which was captured at the battle of Tiberias. It is needless to say that, once at liberty, the Saracens forgot all about their promise.

A hundred years later, Ptolemais was recaptured from the Christians, never to be given up to them again.

This siege also had its chroniclers, its sudden turns of fortune, which rent all Europe and Asia, and its devotion, which was marked in more than one instance by heroism and self-abnegation.

Saint Antonius relates a curious legend in reference to this siege.

"There was," he says, "a celebrated monastery of nuns at Saint-Jean d'Acre belonging to the order of Saint Claire. When the Saracens entered the town, the abbess ordered the convent bell to be rung, and assembled all the community.

"Addressing the nuns, she said: 'My dear daughters and beloved sisters, we have promised the Lord Jesus Christ to be his spotless wives. We are at this moment in twofold danger—danger to our lives and danger to our purity. Those enemies of our bodies and of our souls as well are close at hand, who, after dishonoring those whom they meet, run them through with the sword. If we cannot escape them by flight, at least we can do so by taking a painful but invincible resolve. It is woman's beauty which attracts men most frequently. Let us despoil ourselves of this attraction. Let us use our faces as a means of preserving our moral beauty, our chastity, intact. I will set you the example. Let those who wish to appear spotless before their spotless Spouse imitate their mistress!'

"Having spoken thus, she cut off her nose with a knife. The others followed her example, and courageously disfigured themselves in order to appear more beautiful in the eyes of the Lord.

"By this means they preserved their purity," continues Saint Antonius; "for the Mussulmans, upon seeing their bleeding faces, experienced naught save horror for them, and contented themselves with merely taking their lives."

CHAPTER VII

THE SCOUTS

During this evening when Bonaparte had assembled all his staff, not as a council of war or to formulate a plan of battle, but as a literary and historical committee, several messengers arrived for the Sheik of Aher to warn him that the Pasha of Damascus was preparing to cross the Jordan with an army, in order to force Bonaparte to raise the siege of Saint-Jean-d'Acre.

This army, which, according to the always exaggerated reports of the Arabs, had an immense baggage train with it, was to cross the Jordan at Jacob's Bridge.

On the other hand, Djezzar's agents had visited all the sea-coast of Said, and this contingent had joined those of Aleppo and Damascus, with the greater feeling of security since the messengers of the Pasha had everywhere spread the report that the French were a mere handful of men, that they had no artillery, and that it would suffice for the Pasha of Damascus to show himself and unite with Djezzar to exterminate Bonaparte and his army.

At this news, Bonaparte threw down the volume of Plutarch which he was reading and called for Junot, Vial and Murat. He sent Vial north to take possession of Sour—the ancient Tyre. He despatched Murat northeast to make sure of the Fort of Zaphet; and Junot south, with orders to take possession of Nazareth, and to take observation of the surrounding country from the elevated position of this village.

Vial crossed the mountains at Cape Blanco, and came in sight of Sour on the 3d of April. The French general, from his post at the crest of a little hill, could see the frightened inhabitants leaving the town in disorder with every sign of great terror. He entered the town without any opposition, promised peace and protection to the people who had remained, reassured them, persuaded them to go and look for those who had run away, and at the end of three or four days had the pleasure of seeing them all in their own homes again. Vial returned to Saint-Jean-d'Acre on the 6th of April, leaving a garrison of two hundred men at Sour.

Murat was equally fortunate with his expedition. He made his way to Fort Zaphet, where a few shots drove away half of the garrison. The other half, which was composed of Maugrabins, offered to put themselves under Murat's orders. From there he went to the Jordan, reconnoitred its right bank, took a look at the Lake of Tiberias, and, leaving a French garrison well-provisioned at the fort, he returned with his Maugrabins on the 6th of April.

Junot had taken Nazareth—our Saviour's birthplace—and had encamped there, half in and half out of the village, awaiting fresh orders from Bonaparte, who had told him not to return until he was recalled.

But Murat's endeavors to reassure the commander-in-chief were all vain. His presentiments, and above all the insistence of the Sheik of Aher, gave him no rest in regard to this invisible army which was marching against him. Therefore he accepted the Sheik's offer to go as a scout to the Lake of Tiberias.

Roland, who was weary of remaining in the camp, where, being constantly under Bonaparte's eyes, he could not risk his life as he wished, asked leave to accompany the Sheik in his explorations. They set forth that same night, taking advantage of the coolness and darkness to reach the plain of Esdrelon, which offered them the double shelter of the mountains of Nablos to the right and those of Nazareth to the left.

"On the 7th of April, the promontory on which Saint-Jean-d'Acre is built, the ancient Ptolemais, seemed to be wrapped in as much thunder and lightning as was Mount Sinai on the day when the Lord appeared to Moses from the burning bush.

"Whence came those reports which shook the coast of Syria as with an earthquake? Whence came that smoke which covered the Gulf of Carmel with a cloud as thick as though Mount Elias had become a burning volcano?"

We began the first chapter of the new narrative with these words. The other chapters have only served to explain what had preceded this Syrian campaign—the eighth, and probably the last Crusade.

Bonaparte was in fact beginning his second assault. He had taken advantage of the return of Vial and Murat to try his luck once more. He was in the trench scarcely a hundred paces from the ramparts. Near him stood General Caffarelli, with

whom he was talking. The latter was standing with his hand on his hip, to help balance himself on his wooden leg. The joint of his elbow was just visible above the trench. The peak of Bonaparte's three-cornered hat was also visible above the trench, and it was carried away with a bullet. He stooped down to pick it up, and as he did so noticed the general's position, and, drawing near to him, he said: "General, those Arnauts and Albanians are excellent marksmen, as my hat has just discovered. Take care that they do not do to your arm what they have just done to my hat."

Caffarelli made a disdainful movement. The gallant general had left one of his legs on the banks of the Rhine, and he did not seem alarmed at the prospect of leaving some other portion of his body on the banks of the Kerdaneah. He did not move.

A moment later Bonaparte saw him start and turn round with his arm hanging lifeless at his side. A bullet had struck his elbow and broken the joint. At the same moment Bonaparte raised his eyes and discovered Croisier, not ten paces from them, standing on the edge of the trench. It was useless bravado. Bonaparte therefore called out: "Come down, Croisier, come down! You have no business there. Come down: I wish it."

"Did you not say in public one day that I was a coward?"

"I was wrong, Croisier," replied the general, "and you have proved to me since that I was mistaken. Come down."

Croisier started to obey, but he fell down instead. A bullet had broken his thigh.

"Larrey! Larrey!" cried Bonaparte, stamping his foot impatiently, "here, come here; I have some work for you."

Larrey came up. They laid Croisier on some muskets. As for Caffarelli, he walked away, leaning on the arm of the chief surgeon.

Let us leave the assault, begun under such gloomy auspices, to take its course, and cast our eyes on the beautiful plain of Esdrelon, covered with flowers, and the river Kishon, whose course is marked by a long extent of rose-laurels.

Two horsemen were carelessly riding along the banks of this river. One of them, dressed in the green uniform of the mounted chasseurs, with his sabre at his side and his three-cornered hat on his head, was fanning himself with a perfumed handkerchief, as he might have done with a fan. The tri-colored cockade in his hat showed that he belonged to the French army.

The other wore a red cap tied around his head with a piece of chamois skin. A brilliantly colored head-dress fell over his shoulders. He was completely enveloped in a burnoose of white cashmere, which, when it opened, revealed a rich Oriental caftan of green velvet embroidered with gold. He had a party-colored silk belt, its shades arranged with that marvellous taste which is only to be found in Eastern stuffs. Two pistols with silver-gilt handles wrought like the finest lace were stuck into this belt on one side. His sword alone was of French make. He had wide trousers of red satin tucked into green boots embroidered like the caftan, and of the same material. Besides all this he carried a long, slender lance, light as a reed and strong as a bar of iron, tipped at the end with a bunch of ostrich feathers.

The two young men halted in a bend of the river, in the shade of a little grove of palms; and there, laughing pleasantly together as befitted travelling companions, they began to prepare to eat their breakfast, which consisted of a few pieces of biscuit which the young Frenchman took from his holsters and dipped for a moment in the river.

As for the Arab, he began to look around and above him. Then without saying a word he attacked one of the palm-trees, whose tender porous wood yielded readily to the sharp steel.

"In truth that is a good sword which the commander-in-chief gave me a few days ago," he said; "and I hope before long to try it on something besides palm-trees."

"I should think so," replied the Frenchman, munching the biscuit with his teeth; "that was a gift of Versailles manufacture. But are you destroying that poor tree just to try the temper of the blade?"

"Look!" replied the Arab, pointing upward.

"Faith!" replied the Frenchman, "we shall have a better breakfast than I thought, for it is a date-palm."

And just then the tree fell with a crash, bringing enough fully ripened dates for two or three meals within their reach. They began to attack with the appetites of twenty-five the manna which the Lord had sent. They were in the midst of their meal when the Arab's horse began to neigh.

The Arab uttered an exclamation, darted out of the little grove and scanned the plain of Esdrelon, in the middle of which

they had paused to breakfast.

"What is it?" asked the Frenchman, nonchalantly.

"One of ours riding a fast mare. We shall probably learn what we want to know from him."

He returned and seated himself near his companion, without disturbing himself about his horse, which set off at a fast gallop to meet the oncoming rider. Ten minutes later they heard the gallop of two horses.

A Druse, who had recognized his chief's horse, stopped near the group of palms, where the presence of a second horse indicated that the party had stopped, even if there were no encampment.

"Azib!" called the Arab chief.

The Druse leaped from his horse, throwing the reins upon its neck, and advanced toward the sheik with his hands crossed on his breast and bowing low. The sheik addressed a few words in Arabic to him.

"I was not mistaken," said the Sheik of Aher, turning to his companion. "The advance-guard of the Pasha of Damascus has just crossed Jacob's Bridge."

"We will go and see," returned Roland, whom our readers have doubtless recognized from his indifference to danger.

"There is no need," returned the sheik; "Azib has seen."

"Yes," returned Roland, "but perhaps Azib has not seen correctly. I shall feel more certain when I have seen for myself. This great mountain which looks like a pie must be Mount Tabor. The Jordan is therefore just beyond it. We are within a mile of it. Let us go and look; then we shall know for ourselves what to think."

And without stopping to see whether the Sheik of Aher was following him, Roland leaped upon his horse, which was refreshed by its halt, and galloped swiftly away in the direction of Mount Tabor. A minute later he caught the gallop of the others behind him.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS OF NAZARETH

He rode for three miles over the beautiful plain of Esdrelon—the most immense and the most celebrated in Palestine after that of the Jordan.

In other days it was styled the Paradise and the Granary of Syria, the Plain of Jezreel, the Field of Esdrela, the Plain of Mejiddo. It is mentioned in the Bible under all these names. It witnessed the defeat of the Midianites and the Amalekites by Gideon. It saw Saul encamped by the fountain of Jezreel to fight the Philistines, who were assembled at Aphek. It was in this plain that poor Naboth had his vineyard near the palace of the rich Ahab, and there the infamous Jezebel had him stoned to death as a blasphemer in order to obtain possession of his inheritance. It was there that Joram had his heart pierced by an arrow hurled by the hand of Jehu. And, finally, it was almost on the same spot where the young men had breakfasted, that Jezebel, by Jehu's orders, was thrown from a window, and her body was devoured by dogs.

In the Middle Ages this plain which has seen so many sights was called the Plain of Sabas. To-day it is called Merdjibn-Amer, which means "Pasturage of the sons of Amer." It extends for about fifteen miles between the mountains of Gilboa and those of Nazareth. Mount Tabor rises at its extreme end, and it was toward that that the three riders were galloping without giving a thought to the celebrity of the ground which their horses were trampling with their feet.

Mount Tabor is accessible on all sides, and particularly so toward Fouli, by way of which they were approaching.

They were obliged to climb the summit—an easy task for their Arab horses—before they could look over the Jordan, which from any lower elevation obscured their view of the Jordan and the Lake of Tiberias.

But as they ascended, the horizon broadened around them. Soon, like an immense blue cloth framed in golden-hued sand on one side and hills of tawny verdure on the other, they discovered the Lake of Tiberias, joined to the Dead Sea by the Jordan, which stretches across the bare plain like a yellow ribbon sparkling in the sun. Their eyes were riveted in that direction by the sight of the whole army of the Pasha of Damascus, which was following the eastern bank of the lake and crossing Jacob's Bridge. The entire advance-guard had already disappeared between the lake and the mountain of Tiberias. It was evidently on its way to the village.

It was impossible for the young men to compute, even approximately, the number of this vast concourse. The cavalry alone, marching in the fantastic fashion which the Orientals affect, covered miles of ground. Although the young men were twelve miles away, they could catch the gleam of the weapons, and to them flashes of gold seemed to dart up through the clouds of dust from under the horses' feet.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon. There was no time to lose. The Sheik of Aher and Azib, by resting an hour or two near the river Kishon, could reach Bonaparte's camp about daybreak or a little before, and give him warning.

As for Roland, he undertook to go to Nazareth and put Junot on his guard, intending to remain and fight with him there, where he could have more liberty of action.

The three young men descended the mountain rapidly. They separated at its foot, the two Arabs striking directly across the plain of Esdrelon, and Roland spurring straight for Nazareth, whose white houses, lying like a nest of doves amid the sombre verdure of the mountains, he had seen from the summit of Mount Tabor.

The traveller who has visited Nazareth will remember what abominable roads lead to it. They are bordered with precipices, now on the right, now on the left, and the beautiful flowers which grow wherever there is earth to hold their roots, add to the attractions of the desert, but do not lessen its dangers. There are white lilies, yellow narcissi, blue crocuses, and roses whose freshness and sweetness are beyond description.

Does not the Hebrew word "nezer," which is the root of Nazareth, mean flower?

Owing to the winding road, Roland caught several glimpses of Nazareth before he finally arrived there. When he was within ten minutes of the place he met a detachment of the grenadiers of the nineteenth brigade and making himself known, he inquired whether the general was in Nazareth or its environs.

The general was in Nazareth and had visited its outposts not an hour ago. Roland was obliged to let his horse walk. The noble animal had made thirty-five or forty miles without any rest other than that at breakfast; but as Roland was now sure of finding the general he had no need to force him.

He found a squad of dragoons at the first house in the village, commanded by one of his friends, Major Desnoyers. He left his horse in charge of a soldier and inquired where he could find General Junot's quarters.

It was then about half-past five in the evening. Desnoyers looked at the sun, which was just about to set behind the mountains of Nablos, and replied with a laugh: "This is the hour when the women of Nazareth go to the springs for water. General Junot is probably on his way to the spring."

Roland shrugged his shoulders. Evidently he thought that the general's place was elsewhere, and that he had others to review besides the beautiful daughters of Nazareth. Nevertheless he followed the directions given him and soon reached the other end of the village.

The spring was situated some ten minutes' walk beyond the last house. The avenue leading to it was lined on either side with immense cactus-trees which formed a wall. Roland espied the general a short distance from the spring, where he with his two aides-de-camp followed with his eyes the women who were going and coming.

Junot recognized him at once as General Bonaparte's ordnance officer. The commander-in-chief's partiality for Roland was well-known, and would in itself have sufficed to win him smiles from every one; but his courteous familiarity, and daring courage, which were proverbial in the army, would have won him friends, even though he had possessed a much smaller share of the general's favor.

Junot came to meet him with outstretched hand. Roland, a strict adherent of the proprieties, saluted him as his superior officer; for he dreaded above all that they should think that he attributed the commander-in-chief's kindness to him to his own merit.

"Do you bring us good news, my dear Roland?" asked Junot.

"Yes, general; since I come to announce to you the presence of the enemy," replied Roland.

"Faith!" said Junot, "next to the sight of these beautiful girls, who carry their jugs as if they were each a veritable Princess Nausica, I know of nothing that would be more agreeable to me than a glimpse of the enemy. Look, Roland; see what a haughty air the wenches have. Would you not say they were so many antique goddesses? And when shall we look for the enemy?"

"As soon as you please, general, since they are not more than fifteen or eighteen miles from here."

"Do you know what they answer when you tell them that they are beautiful? 'The Virgin Mary wills it so.' This is really the first time since we came to Syria that I have seen really beautiful women. Have you seen them—the enemy, I mean?"

"With my own eyes, general."

"Where were they coming from? Where are they going? What do they want of us?"

"They are coming from Damascus, and I presume they want to defeat us. They are going to Saint-Jean-d'Acre, if I am not mistaken, to raise the siege."

"Only that? Oh, we will cut them off! Are you going to stay with us, or return to Bonaparte?"

"I shall stay with you, general. I have a great longing to try a turn with the rascals. We are dying of boredom at the siege. Except for the two or three sorties which Djézzar has had the stupidity to make we have had nothing to vary the monotony."

"Well," said Junot, "I can promise you that you will find some variety by to-morrow. By the way, I forgot to ask you how many there were?"

"Ah, general, I will reply to you as an Arab would. As well try to count the sands of the sea! There must be at least twenty-five or thirty thousand of them."

Junot scratched his head.

"The devil!" he said, "there is not much to be done with the few men I have with me."

"How many have you?" asked Roland.

"Just a hundred men more than the three hundred Spartans. But we can do what they did, and that will not be so bad. However, to-morrow morning will be time enough to think of all that. Would you like to see the curiosities of the town, or would you like some supper?"

"Well," said Roland, "it is true that we are in Nazareth, and that interesting relics should not be scarce; but I will not conceal from you, general, that my stomach is just at present more impatient than my eyes. I breakfasted this morning near the Kishon off some hardtack and some dates; and I confess that I am both hungry and thirsty."

"If you will give me the pleasure of supping with me we will try to appease your appetite. As for your thirst, you will never find a better opportunity to quench it." Then, addressing a young girl, he said in Arabic: "Water! Thy brother is thirsty." And he pointed to Roland.

She drew near, tall and stern, her tunic with its long flowing sleeves leaving her arms bare. She tipped the jug which she was carrying on her right shoulder until it was on a level with her left hand. Then with a most graceful motion she offered the water to Roland.

Roland drank deeply, not because the girl was beautiful but because the water was fresh.

"Has my brother drank sufficiently?" asked the girl.

"Yes," replied Roland in the same language, "and thy brother thanks thee."

The young girl bowed, replaced her jug on her right shoulder, and continued on her way to the village.

"Do you know that you speak Arabic very fluently?" asked Junot, laughing.

"Was I not wounded and a prisoner for a month with those rogues," asked Roland, "at the time of the insurrection of Cairo? I had to learn a little Arabic in spite of myself. And since the commander-in-chief has found out that I can chatter a little in the language of the Prophet, he is determined to use me as his interpreter on all occasions."

"Upon my word," said Junot, "if I thought I could learn Arabic as well as you have in a month, I would pay the same price, and get myself wounded and taken prisoner to-morrow."

"Well, general," said Roland, with that harsh, nervous laugh peculiar to him, "if I might offer my advice to you it would be to learn some other language and in a different manner. Let us go to supper, general."

And Roland started for the village without another glance at the beautiful Nazarenes whom Junot and his aides paused again and again to look upon.

CHAPTER IX

THE BATTLE OF NAZARETH

At dawn the next day, about six o'clock in the morning, the drums beat and the trumpets sounded the call.

Roland had told Junot that the advance-guard of the Damascenes was on its way to Tiberias, and Junot, not wishing to give them time to besiege him in his mountain, crossed the ravine between the hills which rise around Nazareth and descend through the valley as far as the village of Cana, which he did not see until he was within three-quarters of a mile of it, for it was hidden behind a spur of the mountain.

The enemy might be either in the valley of Batouf or on the plain which lies at the foot of Mount Tabor. But in either case, as the French were coming down from the "high places," as Scripture has it, they were in no danger of being surprised; on the contrary, they were sure to see the enemy at a distance.

The soldiers were better versed in the miracle which Jesus performed at Cana than in any of his other miracles; and of all the places sanctified by his memory, Cana was the one that was the most firmly impressed upon their minds. For it was at the wedding at Cana that Jesus turned the water into wine. And although the soldiers were very happy on the days when they had water, it is self-evident that they would have been happier had there been any days on which they could have had wine.

It was also at Cana that Jesus performed that other miracle of which Saint John speaks:

There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he had heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him and besought him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was on the point of death.

Then Jesus said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.

The nobleman said unto him, Sir, come down, lest my child die.

Jesus said unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word which Jesus had spoken unto him and went his way.

And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

Junot found the Sheik El-Beled at the entrance of the village of Cana, who was coming to meet him to ask him to go no further, as he said there were two or three thousand of the enemy's cavalry on the plain.

Junot had one hundred and fifty grenadiers of the nineteenth brigade of the line, a hundred and fifty carabineers of the second light, and about a hundred cavalry commanded by Major Duvivier, belonging to the fourteenth dragoons. This made exactly four hundred men, as he had said on the previous night.

He thanked the Sheik El-Beled, and to the latter's great admiration he continued on his way. When he reached one of the branches of the little river which takes its source at Cana, he followed its bank. As he came to the pass which separates Loubi from the mountains of Cana, he saw two or three thousand cavalry divided into several corps, who were galloping about between Loubi and Mount Tabor. To obtain a better idea of their position, he spurred his horse to a gallop and rode as far as the ruins of a little village on the crest of a hill, which the natives of the country called Meschanah.

But just then he caught sight of a second corps marching from the village of Loubi. It was composed of Mamelukes, Maugrabins, and Turcomans. This troop was almost as strong as the other, and Junot, with his four hundred men, had five thousand against him. Moreover, this troop was marching in a compact body, contrary to the custom of the Orientals, and was advancing slowly and in good order. He could see a great many standards, banners and horses' tails in their ranks.

These horses' tails, which served as the ensigns of the pashas, had been the laughing stock of the French until they had learned the origin of this singular standard. Then they had heard that at the battle of Nicopolis, Bajazet, seeing that his standard had been captured by the Christians, with one blow had severed his horse's tail from his body, and putting it on a pike had rallied his soldiers around this novel oriflamme and won the battle, which had proved one of the most disastrous to Christianity which has ever been fought.

Junot was right in estimating that the troop which was marching in such good order was the only one to be feared. He

sent fifty grenadiers to keep back the cavalry whom he had first seen, and whom he had recognized as Bedouins who would be content with harassing his troops during the fight. But he drew up a hundred grenadiers and the hundred and fifty carabineers in opposition to the regular force, keeping the hundred dragoons in reserve, in order to use them later where they might be most needed.

The Turks, when they saw this handful of men draw up to wait for them, thought that they were struck motionless with terror. They approached within pistol range; but then the grenadiers and the carabineers, each choosing his man, fired, and the whole front rank of the Turkish force fell, some of the bullets plowing their way to horses and men in the third and fourth lines. This volley created great confusion among the enemy, and gave the carabineers and grenadiers time to reload. But this time only the front rank fired, the second then passing forward their loaded guns and receiving the discharged ones in exchange.

This continuous fusillade made the Turks falter; but when they saw their own numbers, and the insignificant number of the enemy, they charged with loud shouts. This was the moment for which Roland was waiting. When Junot ordered his two hundred and fifty men to form a hollow square, Roland, at the head of his hundred and fifty dragoons, dashed upon the troop, which was advancing in disorderly fashion, and took them in the flank.

The Turks were not accustomed to these straight sabres, which pierced them like lances at a distance, where their curved cimiers were of no use. The effect of this charge was terrible in consequence. The dragoons cut straight through the body of Mussulmans, coming out on the other side. They gave the square an opportunity to discharge their rifles, and then dashed into the furrow which the bullets had plowed; and riding with sabres held straight before them, enlarged the furrow until it seemed to burst, and the Turkish horsemen, instead of continuing to march with closed ranks, began to scatter all over the plain.

Roland had closed with the standard-bearer of one of the head chiefs. As he wore the curved sabre of the chasseurs instead of the straight one of the dragoons, he and his antagonist were on equal terms. Two or three times, letting the reins fall upon his horse's neck and guiding him with his legs, he carried his hand to his pistols; but this means of defence seemed to him unworthy. He urged his horse upon that of his adversary, and seized the man about the body, and the struggle continued, while the horses, recognizing each other as enemies, bit and tore savagely at each other. For a moment those who were surrounding the two adversaries paused; Frenchmen and Mussulmans waited to see the end. But Roland, loosening his girths, drove the spurs into his horse, which seemed to slip from under him, and his weight dragging upon the Mussulman, he fell head downward, hanging by the stirrups. In a second Roland was up again, his bloody sabre in one hand and the Turkish standard in the other. As for the Mussulman, he was dead, and his horse, spurred by a prick from Roland's sabre, dragged him into the ranks of his comrades, where he increased the disorder.

Meanwhile, the Arabs on the plain of Mount Tabor hastened toward the firing. Two chiefs, who were better mounted, preceded them by about five hundred paces. Junot rode out alone to meet them, ordering his soldiers to leave them to him.

He halted a hundred paces in advance of the fifty whom he had sent as if in derision against the Arabs on the plain; and noticing that the two horsemen with whom he had to do were separated by about a hundred paces, he let his sabre hang by its knot, and took a pistol from his holster. He saw two flaming eyes between the ears of the horse who was coming at full speed against him, and (we have said that he was marvellously skilful with the pistol) he put a ball straight through their owner's forehead. The rider fell, and the horse, carried on by its own impetus, was caught by one of the fifty grenadiers, while the general, replacing the pistol in the holster, and seizing his sabre, cut off his second adversary's head with a single blow.

Then each officer, inspired by his general's example, left the ranks. Ten or twelve single combats like that which we have just described engaged the attention of the whole army, who applauded vigorously. The Turks were defeated in all.

The battle lasted from half-past eight in the morning until three in the afternoon, when Junot ordered a retreat into the mountains of Cana. When he came down in the morning he had seen a large plateau well-suited to his purpose, for he knew that, with his four hundred men, while he could make a brilliant fight he could not expect to win the victory. The battle had been fought; four hundred Frenchmen had held the ground against five thousand Turks for five hours; they had left eight hundred dead and three hundred wounded of the enemy upon the field of battle. They themselves had had five men killed and one wounded.

Junot gave orders that they should take the wounded man with them, and, as his leg was broken, they laid him upon a litter, which four of his comrades carried.

Roland mounted his horse again. He had exchanged his curved sabre for a straight one; and in his holsters he had his pistols, with which he could cut a pomegranate flower at twenty paces. With Junot's two aides-de-camp he took command of the hundred dragoons who formed the general's cavalry; and the three young men in their amicable rivalry converted this errand of death into a pleasure party. Whether they were fighting hand-to-hand with the Turks with their swords, or whether, encouraged by their general's example, they contented themselves with using them as a target for their bullets, they filled the day with picturesque incidents which long furnished heroic anecdotes and amusing tales for the bivouac of the Army of the East.

Junot was sheltered from attack and secure in his position at four o'clock in the afternoon. He had established himself on his plateau, past which flowed one of the feeders of the little river which empties into the sea near Carmel, and was in communication with the Greek and Catholic priests of Cana and Nazareth. He could therefore afford to wait quietly for the reinforcements which Bonaparte would be sure to send him after he had been warned by the Sheik of Aher.

CHAPTER X

MOUNT TABOR

As Roland had said, the Sheik of Aher reached the camp about daybreak. In accordance with his maxim, "Always wake me for bad news but never for good," Bonaparte had been awakened.

The sheik, when admitted to his presence, told him what he had seen, and that twenty-five or thirty thousand men had just crossed the Jordan and entered the territory of Tiberias.

When Bonaparte inquired what had become of Roland, he replied that the young aide-de-camp had volunteered to go and warn Junot, who was at Nazareth, and that there was a great plain at the foot of Tabor between the mountains of Nablos and that mountain in which twenty-five thousand Turks could sleep without inconvenience. Bonaparte sent some one to wake Bourrienne, called for his map, and summoned Kléber.

In the latter's presence he bade the young Druse point out the exact place at which the Mussulmans had crossed the river, the road which they had followed, and that which he and the sheik had taken in returning to the camp.

"You will take your division," Bonaparte said to Kléber; "it should consist of about two thousand men. The sheik will serve as your guide, so that you may follow the same road as that which he chose for Roland. You will reach Safarie by the shortest route; you should be at Nazareth by to-morrow morning. Let each of your men carry enough water for the day. Although I see a river marked on the map, I fear that at this season it will be dried up. If possible give battle on the plain, either in front of or behind Mount Tabor, at Loubi or Fouli. We must take our revenge for the battle of Tiberias which Saladin won over Guy de Lusignan in 1187. See that the Turks lose nothing by waiting all these years. Do not worry about me; I will get there in time."

Kléber assembled his division, and bivouacked near Safarie that evening—Saint Anne and Saint Joachim inhabited that city, according to tradition.

That same evening he was in communication with Junot who had left an advance-guard at Cana, and gone on to Nazareth, for which he showed great partiality. He learned from him that the enemy had not left their position at Loubi, and that they could therefore be found at one of the two points which Bonaparte had indicated—that is, the one in front of Mount Tabor.

There was a village called Saïd-Jarra about three-quarters of a mile from Loubi, which was occupied by a portion of the Turkish army, about seven or eight thousand men in all. He ordered Junot to attack it with a part of his division, while he formed a square with the rest of the men, and charged the cavalry.

Two hours later the pasha's infantry were driven from Saïd-Jarra and the cavalry from Loubi.

The Turks, completely routed, fell back upon the Jordan in great disorder. Junot had two horses killed under him in this engagement. Having nothing better at hand than a dromedary, he mounted that, and soon found himself among the Turks, to whom he looked like a giant. The animal's hamstrings were cut and the dromedary fell, or rather sunk under him. Fortunately Roland had not lost sight of him; he came up with Junot's aide-de-camp, Teinturier—the same one whom Roland had found with him watching the damsels at Nazareth. They fell upon the mass surrounding Junot like a thunderbolt, opened a passage, and made their way to him. They placed him on the horse of a dead Mameluke, and all three, pistol in hand, pierced this living wall and reappeared in the midst of their soldiers, who had believed them to be dead, and who were hastening forward with no other object than that of recovering their dead bodies.

Kléber had come so fast that his army wagons had been unable to keep up with him, and they were unable to pursue the fugitives for lack of ammunition. He fell back upon Nazareth and fortified his position at Safarie.

On the 13th, Kléber sent scouts to reconnoitre the enemy's position. The Mamelukes of Ibrahim Bey, the Janissaries of Damascus, the Arabs of Aleppo, and the different tribes of Syria, had effected a junction with the people of Nablos; and all these different tribes were encamped in the plain of Loubi or Esdrelon.

Kléber informed the commander-in-chief of these details at once. He told him that he had reconnoitred the hostile army, that it amounted to about thirty thousand men, of which there were twenty thousand cavalry; and he announced that he proposed to attack this multitude with his twenty-five hundred men on the following day. He ended his letter with these words: "The enemy is exactly where you wanted him. Try to come to the jollification."

The Sheik of Aher was intrusted with this message; but, as the plain was overrun with hostile riders, it was sent in triplicate by three different men over three different roads. Bonaparte received two of the three despatches—one at eleven o'clock at night, the other at one in the morning. The third messenger was never heard from.

Bonaparte fully intended to participate in the "jollification." He was eager for general action and a decisive battle which should drive all these hordes back, that they might not eventually crush him against the walls of Saint-Jean-d'Acre.

Murat was sent forward with a thousand infantry, one light piece of artillery, and a detachment of dragoons, at two o'clock in the morning. He had orders to march until he came to the Jordan, where he was to take possession of Jacob's Bridge, to prevent the retreat of the Turkish army. He had more than thirty miles to make.

Bonaparte started at three in the morning, taking every man with him who was not absolutely needed to keep the enemy within their walls. He bivouacked on the heights of Safarie at daybreak, and distributed bread, water and brandy to his men. He had been forced to take the longest road, because his artillery and wagons could not follow him along the banks of the Kishon. He took up his march again at nine o'clock in the morning, and at ten he reached the foot of Mount Tabor.

There, about nine miles away, on the vast plain of Esdrelon, he saw Kléber's division, scarcely twenty-five hundred strong, face to face with the entire body of the enemy's army, which enveloped it on all sides, and where it looked like a black patch surrounded by a wall of fire.

It was being attacked by more than twenty thousand cavalry, which twisted now like an avalanche, now like a whirlwind. Never had these men, who had seen so many things, been confronted with such a horde of cavalry, charging and galloping around them. And yet each soldier, standing foot to foot with his neighbor, preserved the terrible calmness which could alone insure his safety, received the Turks at the end of his rifle, and fired only when he was sure of his man; stabbing the horses with his bayonet when they came too near, but reserving his bullets for their riders.

Each man had received fifty cartridges, but at eleven in the morning they were obliged to make a fresh distribution of fifty more. They had fired a hundred thousand bullets; they had made a breastwork of dead horses and men around themselves; and this horrible heap, this bleeding wall, sheltered them like a rampart.

This was what Bonaparte and his men saw when they rounded Mount Tabor. At this sight enthusiastic shouts rang down the line: "To the enemy! To the enemy!"

But Bonaparte shouted, "Halt!" He made them take a quarter of an hour's rest. He knew that Kléber could hold out for hours yet if necessary, and he wished the day's work to be well done. Then he formed his six thousand men into two squares of three thousand men each, and distributed them in such wise as to inclose the whole savage horde of cavalry and infantry in a triangle of steel and fire.

The combatants were in such deadly earnest that—like the Romans and Carthaginians, who, during the battle of Trasimene did not feel the earthquake which overthrew twenty-two cities—neither the Turks nor the French perceived the advance of the two armed bodies, in whose trains thunder was rolling, as yet mute, but with its glistening weapons flashing in the sunlight, forerunners of the storm which was about to burst.

Suddenly they heard a single cannon-shot. This was the signal agreed upon to warn Kléber of Bonaparte's approach. The three squares were now not more than three miles apart, and their combined fire was about to be directed upon a struggling mass of twenty-five thousand men. The fire burst forth from all three sides at once.

The Mamelukes and Janissaries, in short all the cavalry, turned this way and that, not knowing how to escape from the furnace, while the ten thousand infantry, ignorant of all the art and science of war, broke their ranks and hurled themselves upon all three lines of fire.

All who were fortunate enough to run between the shots were fortunate enough to escape. At the end of an hour the fugitives had disappeared like dust swept by the wind, leaving the plain covered with dead, abandoning their camp, their standards, four hundred camels, and an immense amount of booty.

The fugitives thought themselves safe, and those who succeeded in reaching the mountains of Nablos did indeed find shelter there; but those who tried to escape across the Jordan by the way they had come, found Murat and his thousand men guarding the ford of the river.

The French did not stop until they were weary of killing. Bonaparte and Kléber met upon the battlefield and embraced amid the shouts of the three squares.

According to tradition, it was then that the colossal Kléber, putting his hand on Bonaparte's shoulder, who barely

reached to his chest, said those words which have so often since been disputed: "General, you are as great as the world!"

Bonaparte ought to have been content.

He had just conquered on the same spot where Guy de Lusignan had been defeated; it was there that, on the 5th of July, 1187, the French, "after having exhausted even the source of their tears," says the Arab author, "met in desperate conflict with the Mussulmans commanded by Saladin."

"At the beginning," says the same author, "they fought like lions; but at the end they were nothing more than scattered sheep." Surrounded on all sides, they were driven back to the foot of the Mount of Beatitudes, where our Saviour in teaching the people had said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that weep, blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake"; and where he also said: "When ye pray say, 'Our Father, who art in heaven.'"

The whole action took place in the neighborhood of this mountain, which the infidels call Mount Hittin.

Guy de Lusignan took refuge among the hills and defended the True Cross as well as he could; but he could not prevent the Mussulmans from capturing it after they had mortally wounded the Bishop of Saint-Jean-d'Acre who was carrying it.

Raymond opened a passage for his men and escaped to Tripoli, where he died of grief. So long as a single group of horsemen remained, they returned to the charge; but it melted before the Saracens like wax before a blazing furnace. Finally the king's standard fell to rise no more. Guy de Lusignan was made a prisoner, and Saladin, taking the sword of the King of Jerusalem from the hands of the man who brought it to him, dismounted from his horse, and, kneeling down, gave thanks to Mohammed for the victory.

Never did Christians in Palestine or elsewhere suffer such a defeat. "In looking over the number of the dead," says an eye-witness, "one could not credit the fact that any prisoners had been made; in looking upon the prisoners one could not believe that there were any dead."

The king, after having sworn to renounce his kingdom, was sent to Damascus. All the chevaliers of the Temple and the Hospitallers lost their heads. Saladin, fearing that his soldiers might feel the touch of that pity which left him unmoved, offered fifty gold pieces for the head of every one of these soldiers-monks which should be brought to him.

Scarcely a thousand men were left out of the whole Christian army. The Arab authors say that prisoners were sold for a pair of sandals, and that they exposed the heads of the Christians like melons in Damascus.

Monseigneur Mislin, in his beautiful book, "Les Saints Lieux," says that a year after this horrible carnage, in crossing the field of Hittin, he still found heaps of bones, and that the mountains and valleys adjoining were covered with remains which wild beasts had dragged thither.

After the battle of Mount Tabor the jackals of the plain of Esdrelon had no need to envy the hyenas of the mountain of Tiberias.

CHAPTER XI

THE BULLET MERCHANT

Since Bonaparte had returned from Mount Tabor, nearly a month before, not a day had passed that the batteries had ceased to thunder, or when there had been a truce between besieged and besiegers. This was the first resistance that Fortune had cast in Bonaparte's path. The siege of Saint-Jean-d'Acre lasted sixty days. There were seven assaults and twelve sorties. Caffarelli died from having his arm amputated, and Croisier was still confined to his couch of suffering. A thousand men had been killed or had died of the plague. And while there was still plenty of powder there were no bullets.

The report spread through the army; such things cannot be concealed from the soldiers. One morning a sergeant-major approached Roland, who was in the trench with Bonaparte, and said to him: "Is it true, my commandant, that the commander-in-chief is in need of bullets?"

"Yes," replied Roland. "Why?"

"Oh," replied the sergeant-major, with a movement of the neck which was peculiar to him, and apparently dated back to the days when he wore a cravat for the first time, and did not like the feeling, "if he wants some I can get them for him."

"You?"

"Yes, I. And not so dear either. Five sous."

"Five sous! And they cost the government forty!"

"You see, it would be a good bargain."

"You are not joking?"

"Do you think I would joke with my superiors?"

Roland went up to Bonaparte and told him what the sergeant-major had just said.

"These rogues often have good ideas," he said. "Call him."

Roland beckoned to the sergeant to come forward. He advanced with a military step, and stopped a couple of yards away from Bonaparte with his hand at the vizor of his shako.

"Are you the bullet merchant?" asked Bonaparte.

"I sell them, but I do not make them."

"And you can furnish them for five sous?"

"Yes, general."

"How do you do that?"

"Ah! that is my secret! If I were to tell it, everybody would be selling them."

"How many can you furnish me?"

"As many as you wish," replied the sergeant-major.

"What must I give you for that?"

"Permission to go in bathing with my company."

Bonaparte burst out laughing, for he understood at once.

"Very well," he said. "Go!"

The sergeant-major saluted and started off at a run. Shortly afterward the commander-in-chief and his aide saw the company to whom the former had given the permission to bathe pass with the sergeant-major at their head.

"Come and see something curious," said Bonaparte.

And taking Roland's arm, he ascended a little hill, from which the whole gulf was visible.

They saw the sergeant-major set the example by rushing into the water, as he certainly would have done had he been rushing into fire, after having first removed his clothing, and waded into the sea with a part of his men, while the others scattered along the shore. Roland had not understood until then.

But scarcely had the sergeant-major executed this manoeuvre than the English frigates and the ramparts of Saint-Jean-d'Acre opened fire, and a storm of bullets fell around them. As the soldiers, both those who were in the water and those who had remained on shore, took good care to stay at a safe distance from each other, the bullets fell into the spaces between them, and were immediately picked up without a single one being lost, not even those which fell into the water. The beach sloped gradually, and the soldiers had only to stoop and pick them up.

This strange game lasted two hours. At the end of that time the inventor of the system had collected from a thousand to twelve hundred bullets, which netted three hundred francs to the company, a hundred francs for each man lost. The company thought it a very good bargain. As the batteries of the frigates and the city were of the same calibre (16 and 12) as those used by the French army; not a bullet was lost.

The next day the company went in bathing again, and when the commander-in-chief heard the cannonading he could not resist the temptation of witnessing the strange spectacle once more, and this time some of the principal officers of the army accompanied him. Roland could not contain himself. He was one of those men who go mad over the sound of cannon and who are intoxicated by the smell of powder. He dashed down to the shore in two bounds, and tossing all of his clothes except his drawers upon the shore, he sprang into the sea. Twice Bonaparte called him back, but he did not seem to hear.

"What ails the foolish fellow," he murmured, "that he will never let slip an opportunity to be killed?"

Roland was no longer there to reply, and he would probably not have replied had he been there. Bonaparte followed him with his eyes. He soon passed the cordon of bathers, and swam out until he was almost within musket range of the "Tiger." They opened fire upon him, and the balls sent the water seething around him.

This did not disturb him, and his conduct so closely resembled bravado that an officer on the "Tiger" ordered a boat lowered. Roland longed to be killed, but he did not wish to be taken prisoner. He swam vigorously for the reefs which lie along the base of Saint-Jean-d'Acre. It was impossible for the boat to pursue him among those reefs.

Roland disappeared for a moment, and Bonaparte was beginning to fear that some accident had befallen him, when he reappeared at the foot of the city, within the range of fire of the musketry. The Turks, seeing a Christian within rifle-shot, did not hesitate to fire upon him; but Roland seemed to be in league with the bullets. He walked slowly back along the edge of the water. The sand on one side and the water on the other were thrown up almost at his very feet. He reached the spot where he had removed his clothes, dressed himself, and returned to Bonaparte's side.

A *vivandière* who was with the party at the time, distributing the contents of her cask to the bullet gatherers, offered him a glass.

"Ah! is it you, Goddess of Reason?" said Roland. "You know very well that I never drink brandy."

"No," said she; "but once does not make a habit, and what you have just done deserves a drop, citizen-commandant." And she held out a little silver cup full of liquor.

"To the health of the commander-in-chief and of Saint-Jean-d'Acre," said she.

Roland raised his glass toward Bonaparte and drank. Then he offered her a piece of money.

"Pooh!" said she, "I sell my liquor to those who need to buy courage, but not to you. Besides, my husband will make a good thing out of this."

"What is your husband doing?"

"He is the bullet merchant."

"Well, to judge by the cannonading, he is liable to make a fortune in a short time. Where is this husband of yours?"

"There he is," she said, pointing out to Roland the sergeant-major who had suggested that he be allowed to sell bullets to Bonaparte. As the Goddess of Reason was pointing, a shell buried itself in the sand not four feet from the speculator.

The sergeant-major, who seemed to be familiar with all sorts of projectiles, threw himself face downward in the sand and waited. The shell burst in about three minutes, scattering a cloud of sand.

"Upon my word, Goddess of Reason," said Roland, "I am afraid that shell has made you a widow."

But the sergeant-major rose unhurt from the midst of the dust and sand. He seemed to be rising from the crater of a volcano. "Long live the Republic!" he shouted as he shook himself.

And on the instant, from the shore and the water, that sacred phrase, which made the dead immortal, was taken up by spectators and actors.



CHAPTER XII

HOW CITIZEN PIERRE-CLAUDE FARAUD WAS MADE A SUB-LIEUTENANT

This collecting of musket balls lasted four days; but the English and Turks finally guessed the meaning of this performance which they had at first taken to be bravado.

A count of the balls showed that they had picked up thirty-four hundred. Bonaparte paid for them to the last sou through Estève, the paymaster of the army.

"Ah!" said Estève, when he recognized the sergeant-major, "so you are speculating in artillery again! I paid you for a cannon at Froeschwiller, and now I am to pay you for thirty-four hundred cannon-balls at Saint-Jean-d'Acre."

"Pooh!" said the sergeant-major, "I am none the richer for it; the six hundred francs at Froeschwiller, together with the Prince de Condé's treasure, went to the fund of the widows and orphans of Dawendorff."

"And what are you going to do with this money?"

"Oh! I have a use for it."

"Might I ask what it is?"

"Certainly, since I depend on you to undertake the commission, citizen-paymaster. This money is destined for our brave Captain Guillet's old mother. He was killed at the last assault. He bequeathed her to his company before he died. The Republic is not very rich and might forget to pay the pensions of its widows. Well, in default of a pension the company will send her a little capital. It is a great pity, though, that those fools of Turks and those devils of Englishmen should have guessed our game and refused to keep it up any longer; we would have made up a sum of a thousand francs for the poor woman. But what will you, citizen-paymaster! The prettiest girl in the world can give no more than she has; and the thirty-second brigade, although it is the prettiest girl in the army, has only one hundred and seventy francs to offer."

"Where does Captain Guillet's mother live?"

"At Châteauroux, the capital of the Indre. Ah! it is fine to be faithful to one's old regiment, and that is just what he was, that brave Captain Guillet."

"Very well, the sum shall be paid to her, in the name of the third company of the thirty-second brigade, and of—"

"Pierre-Claude Faraud, the executor of his will."

"Thanks. And now, Pierre-Claude Faraud, the commander-in-chief wishes me to say to you that he wants to speak with you."

"Whenever he likes," replied the sergeant-major, with that twist of the neck which was peculiar to him. "Pierre-Claude Faraud is never too much embarrassed to talk."

"He will send for you."

"I await the summons." And the sergeant-major turned upon his heel and returned to the barracks of the thirty-second brigade, to wait until he was sent for.

Bonaparte was eating dinner in his tent when he was informed that the sergeant-major whom he had sent for was awaiting his pleasure.

"Let him come in," said Bonaparte.

The sergeant-major entered.

"Ah! it is you," said Bonaparte.

"Yes, citizen-general, did you not send for me?" replied Faraud.

"What brigade do you belong to?"

"The thirty-second."

"To what company?"

"The third."

"Captain?"

"Captain Guillet, deceased."

"Not replaced?"

"Not replaced."

"Which of the two lieutenants is the braver."

"There is no 'braver' in the thirty-second. They are all equally brave."

"The older, then?"

"Lieutenant Valats, who stayed at his post with a shot through his breast."

"The second lieutenant was not wounded?"

"That was not his fault."

"Very well. Valats then will be captain, and the second lieutenant will succeed him. Now, is there not an under-officer who has distinguished himself?"

"All the men distinguished themselves."

"But I cannot make them all lieutenants, stupid."

"That is a fact. Well, then there is Taberly."

"Who is Taberly?"

"A brave man."

"And would his appointment be well received?"

"With applause."

"Then there will be a vacant sub-lieutenancy. Who is the oldest sergeant-major?"

The man whom he was questioning made a movement with his neck as if his cravat were strangling him. "He is one Pierre-Claude Faraud," he replied.

"What have you to say about him?"

"Nothing much."

"Perhaps you do not know him?"

"It is exactly because I do know him."

"Well, I know him also."

"You know him, general?"

"Yes; he is an aristocrat of the Army of the Rhine—"

"Oh!"

"A quarrelsome fellow—"

"General!"

"Whom I caught fighting a duel with a brave Republican at Milan."

"He was one of his friends, general. Friends may fight."

"And whom I sent to the guard-house for forty-eight hours."

"Twenty-four, general."

"Then I cheated him out of the other twenty-four."

"He is ready to take them, general."

"A sub-lieutenant is not sent to the guard-house; he is put under arrest."

"General, Pierre-Claude Faraud is not a sub-lieutenant, he is only a sergeant-major."

"Oh, yes; he is a sub-lieutenant."

"That's a good one, for example! Since when?"

"Since this morning. See what it is to have patrons."

"I? Patrons?"

"Oho! So it is you?"

"Yes, it is I. And I should like to know who my patrons are."

"I," replied Estève, "who have twice seen you generously give away money which you have earned."

"And I," said Roland, "because I want a brave man to second me on an expedition from which few will return."

"Take him," said Bonaparte; "but I advise you not to give him sentry duty if there are any wolves in the country."

"What, general, do you know that story?"

"I know everything, monsieur."

"General," said Faraud, "you are the one to do my twenty-four hours in the guard-house."

"Why?"

"Because you have just said monsieur."

"Come, come," said Bonaparte, laughing, "you are a bright fellow; I shall remember you. In the meantime you must drink a glass of wine to the health of the Republic."

"General," said Roland, "citizen Faraud never drinks to the health of the Republic in anything but brandy."

"The deuce! And I have none," said Bonaparte.

"I have provided for the emergency," replied Roland; and going to the flap of the tent he said, "Come in, citizeness Reason."

Citizeness Reason obeyed. She was still beautiful, although the sun of Egypt had darkened her complexion.

"Rose here!" exclaimed Faraud.

"Do you know the citizeness?" asked Roland, laughing.

"I should think so; she is my wife!" replied Faraud.

"Citizeness," said Bonaparte, "I saw you at work in the midst of the musket balls. Roland wanted to pay you for the brandy you gave him when he came out of the water, but you refused. As I had no brandy here, and my guests each desire a glass, Roland said: 'Let us call the Goddess of Reason, and we can pay her for it all at the same time.' So we called you. Now serve us."

Citizeness Reason tipped her little cask and poured out a glassful for each. She forgot Faraud.

"When the health of the Republic is drunk," observed Roland, "everybody drinks."

"But any one who chooses is at liberty to drink water," cried Bonaparte; and raising his glass, he cried, gayly, "To the health of the Republic."

The toast was repeated in chorus. Then Roland, drawing a parchment from his pocket, said: "Here is your bill of exchange on posterity, but it is in your husband's name. You may indorse it, but he alone can use it."

The Goddess of Reason unfolded the parchment with trembling hands, while Faraud looked on with sparkling eyes.

"Here, Pierre," she cried, "read it! It is your commission as sub-lieutenant in Taberly's place."

"Is that true?" asked Faraud.

"Look for yourself."

Faraud looked.

"Hurrah! Sub-lieutenant Faraud!" he shouted. "Long live General Bonaparte!"

"Twenty-four hours' arrest for having cried 'Long live General Bonaparte!' instead of 'Long live the Republic!'" said Bonaparte.

"I certainly cannot escape them," said Faraud; "but I will do those twenty-four hours with pleasure."

CHAPTER XIII

THE LAST ASSAULT

During the night following Faraud's promotion to a sub-lieutenancy, Bonaparte received eight heavy pieces of artillery and an abundance of ammunition. Faraud's thirty-four hundred balls had served to repulse the sorties from the town. The "Accursed Tower" was almost completely demolished, and Bonaparte resolved to make a last effort.

Then, too, the circumstances rendered this imperative.

A Turkish fleet of thirty vessels, escorted by English warships, was sighted on the 8th of May. It was scarcely daylight when Bonaparte learned of this. He climbed the little hill whence he could survey the entire harbor. It was his opinion that the fleet came from the Island of Rhodes, and was conveying ammunition, troops and provisions to the besieged.

It became imperative therefore to take Saint-Jean-d'Acre before the town received these reinforcements.

When Roland saw that he had decided upon the attack, he asked the general for two hundred men with full permission to use them in any way and for whatever purpose he should choose.

Bonaparte asked for an explanation. He had great confidence in Roland's bravery, which amounted almost to rashness; but because of this very rashness he feared to intrust the lives of two hundred men to him. Then Roland explained that the day when he took his long swim he had seen a breach in the walls from the sea which could not be seen from land, and which had evidently caused the besieged no anxiety, defended as it was by an inside battery and the fire from the English frigates. He intended to enter the town through this breach and then create a diversion with his two hundred men.

Bonaparte gave him the desired permission. Roland chose two hundred men from the thirty-second brigade, and among them Sub-lieutenant Faraud.

Bonaparte ordered a general attack. Murat, Rampon, Vial, Kléber, Junot, generals of division, generals of brigade, chiefs of corps, all were to charge at once.

At ten o'clock in the morning all the outer works which had been recaptured by the enemy were thrown down once more. Five flags were taken, three cannon carried off, and four more spiked. But the besieged did not yield an inch; as fast as they were beaten down, others took their places. Never had such audacity and ardor, never had more impetuous courage and obstinate valor, struggled for the possession of a city.

Generals, officers and soldiers fought together in confusion in the trench. Kléber, armed with an Albanian rifle which he had wrested from its owner, made a club of it, and raising it above his head as a thresher uses his flail, he brought down a man with every blow. Murat, with his head uncovered and his long hair floating in the wind, was flashing his sabre back and forth, its fine temper bringing its message of death to all those who came in contact with it. Junot killed a man, now with a pistol, now with a rifle, every time he fired.

Boyer, the commander of the eighteenth brigade, fell in the disorder with seventeen officers and more than a hundred and fifty soldiers of his corps; but Lannes, Bon, and Vial passed over their bodies, which only served to raise them closer to the ramparts.

Bonaparte, not in the trench, but upon it, was directing the artillery himself, and motionless, a target for all, was making a breach in the wall on his right with the cannon in the tower. They had made a practicable opening at the end of an hour. They had no bushes with which to fill up the ditch; but they threw in the corpses as they had already done at another part of the ramparts. Mussulmans and Christians, French and Turks, thrown out through the windows of the tower where they laid heaped up, raised a bridge as high as the ramparts.

Shouts of "Long live the Republic!" were heard, with cries of "To the assault!" The band played the "Marseillaise," and the rest of the army joined in the fight.

Bonaparte sent one of his ordnance officers named Raimbaud, to tell Roland that the time had come for him to effect his diversion; but when he learned what had been projected, instead of returning to Bonaparte, Raimbaud asked permission to remain with Roland. The two young men were friends, and when a battle is on one does not refuse favors of that sort to a friend.

Roland no sooner heard the order than he placed himself at the head of his two hundred men, plunged into the water with

them, turned the corner of the bastion with the water up to their waists, and presented himself in the breach with the trumpets in front. The attack was so unexpected, although the siege had lasted two months, that the gunners were not even at their posts. Roland took possession of them, and having no men to work them, he spiked them. Then shouting, "Victory! Victory!" they dashed into the winding streets of the town.

These cries were heard on the ramparts and redoubled the ardor of the besiegers. For the second time Bonaparte believed himself master of Saint-Jean-d'Acre, and sprang into the "Accursed Tower," which they had had such difficulty in taking. But when he reached it he saw with dismay that the French troops had been brought to a halt by a second inclosure. This was the one which Colonel Phélippeaux—Bonaparte's companion at Brienne—had constructed behind the other.

Leaning half-way out of the window, Bonaparte shouted encouragement to his soldiers. The grenadiers, furious at meeting with this fresh obstacle, attempted to mount on each other's shoulders for want of ladders; but suddenly, while the assailants were being attacked in front by those who had been placed there to defend the inclosure, they were swept by a battery in the flank. A tremendous fusillade burst forth on all sides—from the houses, the streets, the barricades, and even from Djeddar's seraglio. A thick smoke poured up from the city. It was Roland, Raimbaud and Faraud who had fired the bazar. In the midst of the smoke they appeared on the roofs of the houses, and endeavored to enter into communication with those on the ramparts. Through the smoke of the fire and of the artillery they saw the tri-colored plumes waving, and from the city and the ramparts they could hear the cry of "Victory!" which went up for the third time that day. It was destined to be the last.

The soldiers who were to effect a junction with Roland's two hundred men, a portion of whom had already slid down into the town, while the others were fighting on the ramparts or in the ditches, being assailed by volleys from four sides, hesitated as the bullets whistled and the cannon roared around them, falling like hail and passing like a hurricane. Lannes, wounded in the head by a musket ball, fell upon his knees, and was carried off by his soldiers. Kléber held his own like an invulnerable giant in the midst of the fire. Bon and Vial were driven back into the ditch. Bonaparte sought for some one to support Kléber, but every one was occupied. He then ordered the retreat with tears of rage in his eyes; for he did not doubt that all who had entered the town with Roland, together with those who had slipped over the ramparts to join him, some two hundred and fifty or three hundred in all, were lost. And what a harvest of heads they would have to gather in the moat the next day.

He was the last one to retreat, and he shut himself up in his tent with orders that no one was to disturb him. This was the first time in the course of three years that he had doubted his own fortune.

What a sublime page could be written by the historian who could tell what thoughts passed through his mind in that hour of despair.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAST BULLETIN

Meanwhile Roland and his men, and those who had gone into the town to join him, having cherished for a time the hope that they were to be supported, were at last forced to the conviction that they had been abandoned. The shouts of victory which had answered their own became fainter and fainter, and then died away. Then the volleys of musketry and cannon gradually grew fainter, until they had ceased entirely in the course of an hour. Amid the other sounds which encompassed him, Roland even thought that he heard the sound of the drums and trumpets sounding and beating the retreat.

Then, as we have said, all these sounds ceased.

Then, like a tide rising upon all sides at once, from all points of the compass, the little troop was assailed by English, Turks, Mamelukes, Arnauts, Albanians—the entire garrison, in short, of some eight thousand men.

Roland formed his little troop into a square, one side of which he backed against a mosque, thus converting it into a fortress, and there, after making them swear to defend themselves to the death against these enemies from whom they knew they could expect no quarter, they waited with levelled bayonets.

The Turks, full of overweening confidence in their cavalry as usual, dashed upon the little troop with such violence that, although the double volley of the French laid low over sixty men and horses, those who came up behind rode over their bodies and dashed upon the bayonets of the still smoking guns.

But there they were forced to stop. The second rank had time to reload and fire at close quarters. They had no choice but to fall back, and as they could not again cross the heap of corpses, they sought to flee to the right and left. Two terrible volleys accompanied their flight and cut them down in swaths. But they returned with all the greater desperation.

Then a frightful struggle ensued, a regular hand-to-hand encounter, in which the Turkish horsemen, defying the murderous volleys, rushed up to the very points of the French bayonets, to discharge their pistols at their adversaries.

Others again, seeing that the reflection of the sun upon the gun-barrels frightened their horses, made them walk backward, and, forcing them to rear, threw them over on the bayonets. The wounded dragged themselves along the ground, and, gliding like serpents under the gun-barrels, hamstrung the French.

Roland, perceiving that the number of his men was decreasing, and that, despite the triple row of corpses which formed a rampart for the little troop, he could not hope to sustain the unequal fight much longer, had the door of the mosque opened, and with the utmost composure, continuing his murderous fire all the while, he bade his men enter, being the last to pass through the door himself. Then the firing began again through every opening in the mosque; but the Turks brought up pieces of artillery and trained them against the door. Roland himself was near a window, and one after another, the three gunners who drew near to apply the match to the touch-hole fell. Then a horseman rode swiftly toward the gun, and, before any one could divine his motive, he fired his pistol at the priming. The gun was discharged, and the door broken in.

This broken entrance emitted such a terrible fusillade, however, that the Turks presented themselves before it three times to enter the mosque and were repulsed each time. Mad with rage, they rallied, and made a fourth attempt, but this time only a few scattered shots replied to their shouts of death. The little troop had exhausted its ammunition. The grenadiers awaited the enemy with fixed bayonets.

"Friends," cried Roland, "remember that you have sworn to die rather than be made prisoners by Djezzar the Butcher, who cut off your comrades' heads."

"We swear it!" replied Roland's two hundred men with one voice.

"Long live the Republic!" said Roland.

"Long live the Republic!" they all repeated after him.

And each man prepared to die, but to sell his life dearly. Just then a group of officers appeared at the doorway with Sidney Smith at their head. They all carried their swords in their scabbards. Smith raised his hat and made a sign that he wished to speak. Silence ensued.

"Gentlemen," he said in excellent French, "you are brave men, and it shall never be said that men who had borne

themselves like heroes were massacred in my presence. Give yourselves up; I will guarantee that your lives shall be spared."

"It is too much or not enough," replied Roland.

"Pray what do you want?"

"Kill us to the last man, or let us all go."

"You are exacting, gentlemen," said the commodore; "but one can refuse nothing to such men as you. But you will permit me to furnish you with an escort of Englishmen as far as the gate? Otherwise none of you will reach it alive. Is that agreed?"

"Yes, my lord," replied Roland; "and we can only thank you for your courtesy."

Sidney Smith left two English officers to guard the door, entered the mosque himself, and held out his hand to Roland. Ten minutes later the English escort arrived.

The French soldiers with fixed bayonets, and the English officers with drawn swords, traversed the street which led to the French camp, amid the imprecations of the Mussulmans, the howling of the women, and the cries of the children. The ten or twelve wounded, among them Faraud, were carried on improvised litters of gun-barrels. The Goddess of Reason walked beside the sub-lieutenant's litter, pistol in hand. Smith and his English soldiers accompanied the grenadiers until they were out of range of the Turkish guns, and as they defiled before the redcoats the latter presented arms.

Bonaparte, as we have said, had retired within his tent. He called for Plutarch, and read the biography of Augustus; then, thinking of Roland and his gallant companions, who were probably being murdered, he muttered, like Augustus after the battle of Teutberg: "Varus, give me back my legions!"

But he had no one of whom he could demand his legions, for he had been his own Varus.

Suddenly he heard a great uproar and the strains of the "Marseillaise" reached his ears. Why did these soldiers rejoice and sing when their general was weeping with rage?

He sprang to the door of his tent. The first persons he saw were Roland, his aide-de-camp Raimbaud, and Faraud.

The wounded man was leaning on the shoulder of the Goddess of Reason. Behind them came the two hundred men whom Bonaparte had thought lost.

"Ah, my good friend," he said, pressing Roland's hand, "I was mourning for you. I thought you were lost. How the devil did you get out of it?"

"Raimbaud will tell you," said Roland, who was in a bad humor because he owed his life to an Englishman; "I am too thirsty to talk, I want something to drink."

And taking a glass full of water, which was standing upon the table, he emptied it at a single draught, while Bonaparte went out to meet the soldiers, all the more delighted to see them since he had never expected to do so again.

CHAPTER XV

VANISHED DREAMS

Napoleon, speaking of Saint-Jean-d'Acre at Saint Helena, said: "That paltry town held the destiny of the East. If Saint-Jean-d'Acre had fallen, I would have changed the face of the world."

This regret, expressed some twenty years later, gives an idea of the poignancy of what Bonaparte must have suffered at the time, when he realized the impossibility of taking Saint-Jean-d'Acre, and published the following order in all the divisions of the army.

As usual, Bourrienne wrote at his dictation:

Soldiers! You have crossed the desert which separates Africa from Asia with more rapidity than an army of Arabs.

The army, which was on its way to invade Egypt, is destroyed. You have taken its general, its camp baggage, its supplies and its camels.

You have captured all the strongholds which defend the wells of the desert. On the fields of Mount Tabor you have dispersed the cloud of men which had gathered from all parts of Asia in the hope of pillaging Egypt.

Finally, after having maintained the war with a handful of men in the heart of Syria for more than three months, taken forty pieces of artillery, fifty flags, six thousand prisoners, levelled the fortifications of Gaza, Jaffa, Kaïffa, and Acre, we are about to return to Egypt; the season of disembarkation calls me back.

A few days more and we might hope to take the pasha in his own palace; but at this season the price of the castle of Acre is not worth the loss of a few days, and the brave men whom I should lose are now necessary to me for other operations.

Soldiers, we have a season of fatigue and danger before us. Having made it impossible for the East to do anything against us during the forthcoming campaign, we shall perhaps be forced to repulse the attack of a part of the West.

You will find new opportunities for glory; and if in so many battles, every day is marked with the loss of a brave man, other brave men must be made every day, and take their places among the little band who set the example of daring in times of danger, and who make victory easy.

As he finished dictating this bulletin to Bourrienne, Bonaparte rose and went out of his tent as if to breathe more freely. Bourrienne followed him uneasily; events seldom left such a deep impression upon that heart of bronze.

Bonaparte climbed the little hill which overlooked the camp, seated himself upon a stone, and remained for a long time staring at the partially demolished fortress and the ocean which lay before him in its immensity. Finally he said: "The men who will write my life will not understand why I was so anxious to take this wretched little place. Ah, if I had taken it as I hoped!"

He let his head fall upon his hands.

"And if you had taken it?" asked Bourrienne.

"If I had taken it," replied Bonaparte, seizing his hand, "I should have found the treasures of the pasha in the city and arms for three hundred thousand men; I would have aroused and armed all Syria; I would have marched upon Damascus and Aleppo; I would have swelled my army with all the malcontents; I would have announced the abolition of servitude and the tyrannical rule of the pashas to the people; I would have reached Constantinople with my armed hordes; I would have overthrown the Turkish Empire; I would have founded a new and vast empire in the Orient which would have fixed my place in history; and perhaps I should have returned to Paris by way of Adrianople and Vienna, after having humbled the house of Austria."

This, as will be seen, was nothing more nor less than Cæsar's project when he fell beneath the assassin's knife; it was his war among the Parthians which was to end only in Germany. As far as was the man of the 13th Vendémiaire from the conqueror of Italy, so far was the conqueror of Italy that day from the conqueror of Egypt.

Proclaimed throughout Europe the greatest of living generals, he sought, on the shores where Alexander, Hannibal and Cæsar had fought, to equal if not surpass the names of these captains of antiquity; and he did surpass them, since he tried

to do what they only dreamed of.

"What would have become of Europe," said Pascal, speaking of Cromwell's death from calculus, "if that grain of sand had not entered his entrails?"

What would have become of Bonaparte's fortunes if Saint-Jean-d'Acre had not stood in the way?

He was dreaming of this great mystery of the unknown when his eye was attracted by a black speck between the mountains of the Carmel chain which was gradually growing larger. As it drew nearer he recognized a soldier of that dromedary corps which he had created "to pursue the fugitives more swiftly after the battle."

Bonaparte drew his glass from his pocket, and, after taking a good look, he said: "Good! Now we shall have some news from Egypt."

And he stood up. The messenger also recognized him; he promptly turned his dromedary, which was edging toward the camp, somewhat out of the direct line toward the hill. Bonaparte descended the hill. The soldier, who seemed to be an excellent rider, put his dromedary to a gallop. He wore the uniform of a quartermaster-general.

"Where do you come from?" called Bonaparte as soon as the man could hear him.

"From Upper Egypt," was the answer.

"What news?"—"Bad, general."

Bonaparte stamped his foot. "Come here," he said.

The man reached Bonaparte in a few moments. The dromedary knelt down and the man slid to the ground.

"Here, citizen-general," he said, and he handed him a despatch. Bonaparte passed it to Bourrienne, saying: "Read it." Bourrienne read:

To the Commander-in-Chief, Bonaparte:

I do not know whether this despatch will reach you, general, or whether, if it does, you will be in a position to remedy the disaster with which I am threatened.

While General Desaix was pursuing the Mamelukes from the coast of Syout, the flotilla composed of the "Italie," and several other armed ships, which carried almost all of the supplies of the division, some artillery, and the sick and wounded, was detained off the coast of Beyrout by the wind.

The flotilla was attacked within a quarter of an hour by the Sherif Hassan and three or four thousand men. We are not in any condition to resist but we shall do so.

But we cannot escape death save by a miracle.

I am preparing this despatch, to which I shall add the details of the battle as it progresses.

Hassan attacks us with a sharp fusillade; I have ordered his fire to be returned. It is two o'clock in the afternoon.

Three o'clock—The Arabs are returning to the charge for the third time, after suffering terrible havoc from our artillery. I have lost a third of my men.

Four o'clock—The Arabs have thrown themselves into the river and taken the small boats. I have only a dozen men, all the rest are dead or wounded. I shall wait until the Arabs have crowded aboard the "Italie," and then I shall blow her up with myself and them.

I am sending this despatch by a brave and clever man, who has promised me that, unless he is killed, he will find you wherever you are. In ten minutes all will be over.

CAPTAIN MORANDI.

"And then?" asked Bonaparte.

"That is all."

"But Captain Morandi?"

"Blew himself up, general," replied the messenger.

"And you?"

"Oh, I did not wait until he blew himself up; I blew away before that, after carefully concealing my despatch in my tobacco-box. Then I swam under water to a place where I hid in the tall grass. When it was dark I came out from under the water, and crawled on all fours to the camp where I came upon a sleeping Arab. I put a dagger into him, and taking his dromedary I started off at a gallop."

"And you have come from Beyrout?"

"Yes, citizen-general."

"Without accident?"

"If you call shots fired at or by me accidents, then I have had plenty and my camel also. Between us we have been hit four times. He three times in the side, and I once in the shoulder. We have been hungry and thirsty; he has eaten nothing at all, and I have eaten horseflesh. But here we are. You are well, citizen-general; that is all that is necessary."

"But Morandi?" asked Bonaparte.

"The deuce! as he put the match to the powder himself, I rather think that it would be difficult to find any of him, even a piece as big as a nut."

"And the 'Italie'?"

"There is not enough of the 'Italie' left to make matches."

"You were right, my friend; this is indeed bad news. Bourrienne, you will say that I am superstitious; but did you notice the name of the vessel?"

"The 'Italie.'"

"Well, now listen, Bourrienne. Italy is lost to France; that is beyond doubt; my presentiments never deceive me."

Bourrienne shrugged his shoulders. "What connection do you find between a ship which is blown up twenty-four hundred miles from France, on the Nile, and Italy?"

"I have said it," replied Bonaparte with a prophetic accent, "and you will see." Then, after a moment's silence, he said, pointing to the messenger: "Take this good fellow with you, Bourrienne; give him thirty talaris, and get him to tell you the story of the battle of Beyrout."

CHAPTER XVI

THE RETREAT

In the evening, in order to conceal its movements from the enemy as well as to avoid the heat of the day, the army began its retreat. The orders were to follow the Mediterranean for the fresh air of the sea.

Bonaparte called Bourrienne and dictated an order to the effect that all who were able must go on foot, leaving the horses, mules and camels for the sick and wounded.

An anecdote will at times convey the state of a man's mind better than any number of descriptions.

Bonaparte had just finished his dictation when his personal attendant, Vigogne senior, entered the tent, and asked: "General, which horse have you reserved for yourself?"

Bonaparte looked him through and through, and then, striking him in the face with his riding-whip, he retorted: "Did you not hear the order, imbecile? Everybody is to go on foot, myself as well as the others. Go!" And he went.

There were three men sick of the plague at Mount Carmel; they, too ill to be moved, were left to the generosity of the Turks and the care of the Carmelite brothers.

Unfortunately, Sidney Smith was not there to save them and the Turks put them to death. Word of this was brought to Bonaparte after he had gone six miles. Then Bonaparte gave full vent to the passion of which the blow which he struck Vigogne was only the prelude. He stopped the artillery wagons and distributed torches to all the army. Then he gave orders to light the torches and to set fire to all the small towns and villages, hamlets and houses on the road. The barley was ripe; they set fire to it. It was a terrible yet a magnificent sight. The whole coast was in flames for thirty miles around, and the sea reflected the tremendous ocean of flames like a gigantic mirror. The bridge, being bare sand, was the only thing which was not on fire, and seemed like a bridge thrown over the Cocytus.

Bonaparte became alarmed when, after breakfast, he again took the head of the column. A devouring thirst, the total want of water, excessive heat, and a fatiguing march through burning sand-dunes had completely demoralized the men, and caused the most cruel selfishness and the most heartrending indifference to supersede all generous sentiments.

And this continued day after day. They began by ridding themselves of those who were sick of the plague under pretext that it was dangerous to take them along. Then came the turn of the wounded. The unfortunate men cried out: "We have not got the plague, we are only wounded." And they showed their old wounds, or inflicted new ones on themselves. But the soldiers did not even turn their heads. "Your turn has come," they said. And they went on.

Bonaparte shuddered with terror when he saw this. He ordered a halt. He forced all the able-bodied men who were on mules, horses, or dromedaries to give them up to the sick and wounded.

They reached Tentoura on the 20th of May, in a stifling heat. They sought vainly for a bit of grass or a tree to give them shelter from the blazing sky. They lay down upon the sand, but it was fiery hot. Men were continually falling to rise no more. A wounded man in a litter asked for water. Bonaparte went up to him.

"Who have you got there?" asked he.

"We do not know," replied the men. "All that we do know is that he wears double epaulets."

The moans and the prayer for water had ceased.

"Who are you?" asked Bonaparte.

The wounded man was silent. Bonaparte raised the cloth which shaded the litter and recognized Croisier.

"Ah, my poor boy!" he exclaimed.

Croisier began to sob bitterly.

"Come," said Bonaparte, "have a little courage."

"Ah," said Croisier, lifting himself up in his litter, "you think I am weeping because I am going to die? I am weeping because you called me a coward; and I tried to get myself killed just because you did call me that."

"But," said Bonaparte, "I sent you a sword after that. Didn't Roland give it to you?"

"Here it is," replied Croisier, seizing the weapon which was at his side, and carrying it to his lips. "Those who are carrying me know that I want to have it buried with me. Tell them to do that, general."

And the wounded man clasped his hands imploringly.

Bonaparte dropped the corner of the cloth which covered the litter, gave the necessary order, and walked away.

When they left Tentoura on the following day they came upon a quicksand of considerable extent. There was no other road, so the artillery was obliged to take it, and the guns sank deep in the sand. They laid all the sick and wounded on the edge for a time, while they harnessed all the horses to the gun-carriages and wagons. But it was useless; wagons and cannon sunk to their middle in the sand. The able-bodied soldiers asked to be allowed to make a last effort. They exhausted themselves uselessly.

They wept as they abandoned the brass which they had so often blessed, which had so often witnessed their triumphs, and which had made Europe tremble.

They slept at Cesarea on the 22d of May.

So many of the sick and wounded had died that horses were more plentiful. Bonaparte, who was himself far from well, had nearly died from fatigue on the previous day. He was so strongly urged to do so that he finally consented to mount a horse. He had hardly gone three hundred paces beyond Cesarea when, about daybreak, a man fired pointblank at him from behind some bushes, but missed him.

The soldiers who were near the commander-in-chief darted into the thicket and dragged out the man, a native of Nablos, who was condemned to be shot on the spot. Four men pushed him toward the sea with the butts of their carbines; there they pulled their triggers, but none of the guns went off. The night had been damp and the powder was wet.

The Syrian, astonished at finding himself still alive, recovered his presence of mind immediately, and throwing himself into the sea, swam to a reef beyond the range of their muskets. The soldiers in their first stupefaction watched him go without thinking to fire off their muskets.

But Bonaparte, who knew what a bad effect it would have upon the superstitious population if such an attempt were to go unpunished, ordered a platoon to fire upon him. They obeyed, but the man was out of range, and the balls fell hissing into the water wide of the reef. The man drew a dagger from his breast and made a threatening gesture with it. Bonaparte ordered them to load again with a charge and a half, and fire once more.

"It is useless," said Roland; "I will go." And he instantly threw off all his clothing, retaining only his drawers.

"Stay here, Roland," said Bonaparte; "I do not wish you to risk your life for that of an assassin."

But whether he did not hear him, or whether he did not wish to hear, Roland had already borrowed a dagger from the Sheik of Aher, who was retreating with the army, and, thrusting it between his teeth, he had thrown himself into the sea. The soldiers, who knew that the young captain was the most daring in the whole army, shouted "Bravo!" Bonaparte was forced to be a witness of the duel which was impending.

The Syrian did not attempt further flight when he saw that it was only one man who was coming after him, but waited. He presented a fine spectacle there on his rock. With one hand clinched and his dagger in the other he looked like a statue of Spartacus on a pedestal. Roland swam toward him, his course as straight as that of an arrow. The Syrian made no attempt to attack him until he had gained a footing; he even drew back courteously as far as the rock would afford him a footing. Roland emerged from the water, young and handsome, and dripping like a sea-god.

They stood facing each other. The rock which was to serve as their arena resembled the shell of an immense tortoise protruding from the water. The spectators looked for a long scientific contest in which neither would give any advantage to the other. But this was not to be.

Roland had no sooner gained his feet and shaken off the water which blinded him as it fell from his dripping hair, than, without taking any precaution to defend himself against his adversary's dagger, he sprang upon him, not as one man springs upon another, but as a jaguar springs upon the hunter. They saw the flash of the daggers, then the two men fell into the water.

There was a tremendous splashing, then one head reappeared—the blond head of Roland.

He clung to the sharp edges of the rock with one hand, then he rested his knee upon it, and finally stood upright, holding his adversary's head by its mass of long hair in the other hand. He resembled Perseus after he had cut off the Gorgon's

head.

A tremendous shout went up among the spectators and reached Roland. Then putting his dagger between his teeth, he sprang into the sea and swam to the shore.

The army had halted. The men had forgotten both heat and thirst. The wounded forgot to think of their wounds. Even the dying found strength to rise on their elbows.

Roland paused ten feet from Bonaparte.

"Here," said he, "is the head of your would-be assassin."

Bonaparte recoiled, in spite of himself. As for Roland, he went straight to his clothes and began to put them on as calmly as if he had come from an ordinary bath, and with a degree of modesty which a woman might have envied him.



CHAPTER XVII

WHEREIN WE SEE THAT BONAPARTE'S PRESENTIMENTS DID NOT DECEIVE HIM

The French arrived at Jaffa on the 24th. They stayed there the 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th. Jaffa was indeed a city of misfortune for Bonaparte.

The reader will remember the four thousand prisoners whom Croisier and Eugene de Beauharnais had taken, who could neither be fed, nor sent to Cairo, and who had to be, and were, shot.

A graver and still more lamentable necessity awaited Bonaparte on his return. There was a hospital at Jaffa for plague-stricken patients. There is a fine picture by Gros, at the Musée, which portrays Bonaparte in the act of touching the plague stricken at Jaffa. The picture is none the less beautiful because it represents an occurrence which did not take place.

Here is what M. Thiers says. We who are only petty novelists are sorry to find ourselves again in opposition to that giant among historians. It is the author of "The Revolution," of "The Consulate and the Empire" who is speaking.

When he reached Jaffa, Bonaparte blew up the fortifications. There was a hospital there for plague-stricken patients. It would have been impossible to carry them away. They would have been exposed to inevitable death had they been left where they were, either from sickness, hunger or the cruelty of the enemy. Therefore Bonaparte told Dr. Desgenettes that it would be much more humane to give them opium than to allow them to live; to which the doctor made the much-lauded reply: "My trade is to cure, not to kill." The opium was not administered, and this occurrence served to propagate an outrageous slander which has now been refuted.

I humbly beg M. Thiers's pardon, but this reply credited to Desgenettes, whom I knew as well as I did Larrey and all of the "Egyptians"—I mean my father's companions in the great expedition—is as apocryphal as that of Cambronne.

God forbid that I should slander (that is the word which M. Thiers used) the man who illuminated the first half of the nineteenth century with the torch of his glory; and when we come to Pichegru and the Duc d'Enghien, the reader will see whether I simply repeat infamous echoes.

We have said that Gros's picture represents something which did not happen, and we will prove it. Here is Davoust's report, written under the eyes and the orders of the commander-in-chief, in his official narrative:

The army reached Jaffa on the 5th Prairial (May 24). It remained there the 6th, 7th, and 8th (25th, 26th, 27th of May). The time was spent in disciplining the villages which had behaved badly. The fortifications of Jaffa were all blown up. All the artillery of the place was thrown into the sea. The wounded were sent away, both by land and sea. There were only a few ships, and in order to give time for the land evacuation we were obliged to defer the departure of the army until the 9th.

Kléber's division formed the rear-guard, and did not start from Jaffa until the 10th (29th of May).

You see not a word about the plague, not a word about the visit to the hospital, and, above all, nothing about the touching of the plague-stricken patients. Not a word in any of the official reports.

Bonaparte's eyes had been bent upon France ever since he had turned them from the East, and it would have been very much misplaced modesty on his part had he concealed such a remarkable fact, which would have done honor, not to his reason perhaps, but to his daring.

Furthermore, this is how Bourrienne, who was an eye-witness, and a very impressionable actor, relates the incident:

Bonaparte went to the hospital. He found men there with their limbs amputated, wounded soldiers, afflicted with ophthalmia, who were moaning piteously, and men sick with the plague. The beds occupied by the latter stood to the right of the entrance. *I was walking beside the general.* I affirm that I did not see him touch one of the plague patients. Why should he? They were in the last stages of the malady; none of them spoke. Bonaparte knew well that he was not immune from the malady. Would fortune interfere in his behalf to shield him. It had certainly not seconded his plans with sufficient ardor during the last two months for him to depend upon that.

I ask: Would he expose himself to certain death, and leave his army in the midst of a desert which we had just made by our own ravages, in a demolished town, without help, or the hope of receiving any—he so necessary, so indispensable, as everybody must admit, to his army; he upon whom rested the responsibility of all the lives of those who had survived the last disaster, and who had just given proof of such devotion by their unalterable courage, their sufferings, and the endurance of privations; who were doing all that he could humanly ask of them, and who had confidence in him.

That is the voice of logic; but here is something convincing.

Bonaparte walked rapidly through the rooms, lightly flicking the yellow tops of his boots with the riding-whip which he held in his hand.

He spoke as follows as he strode back and forth:

"The fortifications are destroyed. Fortune was against me at Saint-Jean-d'Acre. I must go back to Egypt to preserve it against the enemies who are coming. In a few hours the Turks will be here. Let all those who are strong enough to rise, get up and come with us; they will be carried on litters and horses."

There were at the most sixty down with the plague. Anything that may have been said about a greater number is mere exaggeration. Their absolute silence, their complete prostration, and their general weakness announced the near approach of death. To take them in that state meant infallibly to introduce the plague in the army.

If one longs for ceaseless conquests, glory, and brilliant deeds one must accept his share of ill-fortune. When we think we have found something to cavil at in the actions of a leader who is hurried along by reverses and disastrous circumstances to terrible extremities, it is essential, before passing judgment upon him, to post ourselves thoroughly as to the given condition of affairs, and ask ourselves with our hands on our hearts whether we would not have done as he did. Then we must pity the man who is forced to do something cruel, but we must absolve him, since victory—let us be frank about it—cannot be won except with such or similar horrible accompaniments.

Here again is some one who has every interest in telling the truth. Listen:

He ordered an examination to be made in order to determine what had best be done. The report stated that seven or eight were so dangerously ill that they could not live more than twenty-four hours longer, and that, furthermore, plague-stricken as they were, they would spread the disease among all the soldiers who came in contact with them. Several asked for instant death. *He* thought that it would be an act of charity to advance their death by a few hours.

Do you still doubt? Napoleon shall speak for himself in the first person.

Where is the man who would not have preferred a speedy death to the horror of living exposed to the tortures of these barbarians? *If my son*—and I think I love him as dearly as a child can be loved—*were in a situation similar to that of those unfortunates, my opinion would be in favor of doing the same thing to him; and were I in the same position I should demand that it be done to me.*

It seems that nothing could be clearer than those few lines. How does it happen that M. Thiers did not read them? And if he did read them, why did he deny a fact which was confessed by the man who would have the most interest in concealing it?

Thus we establish the truth, not for the purpose of attacking Bonaparte, who could not have acted otherwise, but to prove to the partisans of *pure* history that it is not always *true* history.

The little army followed the same route in returning from Cairo that it had on coming to Syria. But the heat grew more terrible each day. When they left Gaza it registered 35 degrees Centigrade, and if the mercury was placed in the sand it rose to 45 degrees. Bonaparte noticed two men filling a grave a short time before they reached El-Arich. He thought he recognized in them the two men to whom he had spoken a fortnight before. And when he questioned them they said that they were indeed the men who had carried Croisier's litter. The poor fellow had just died of tetanus.

"Did you bury his sabre with him?" asked Bonaparte.

"Yes," replied both men together.

He stayed until the grave was filled up. Then fearing that it might be violated, he said: "I want a volunteer to stay here as a sentinel until the army has passed."

"Here," said a voice.

Bonaparte turned and saw Quartermaster Falou seated upon his dromedary. "Ah, is it you?"

"Yes, citizen-general."

"How does it happen that you have a dromedary when the rest are on foot?"

"Because two men have died of the plague on my dromedary's back, and no one will ride it."

"And it seems that you are not afraid of the plague?"

"I am not afraid of anything, citizen-general."

"Very well. I will remember that. Look up your friend Faraud and both of you come to me at Cairo."

"We will be there, citizen-general."

Bonaparte glanced at Croisier's grave.

"Sleep in peace, poor Croisier," he said, "your modest grave will not often be disturbed."



CHAPTER XVIII

ABOUKIR

On the 14th of June, after a retreat across the burning sands of Syria almost as disastrous as the retreat from Moscow through the snows of the Beresina, Bonaparte entered Cairo in the midst of an immense concourse of people. The sheik, who was awaiting him, presented him with a magnificent horse and the Mameluke Roustan.

Bonaparte had said in his bulletin dated from Saint-Jean-d'Acre, that he was returning to Egypt to oppose the landing of a Turkish force assembled in the Island of Rhodes. He had been correctly informed upon this point, and the lookouts at Alexandria signalled on the 11th of July that they had sighted seventy-six sails in the offing, of which twelve were men-of-war, flying the Ottoman flag.

General Marmont, who was in command, sent courier after courier to Cairo and Rosetta, ordering the commander at Ramanieh to send him all the troops at his disposal, and sent two hundred men to the fort at Aboukir to reinforce that point. That same day Colonel Godard, the commander at Aboukir, wrote to Marmont:

The Turkish fleet is moored in the roadstead; I and my men will hold out until the last man falls rather than yield.

The 12th and 13th were employed by the enemy in hastening the arrival of some battalions which were behindhand.

There were one hundred and thirty ships in the roadstead on the evening of the 13th, of which thirteen carried seventy-four guns each, nine were frigates, and seventeen gunboats. The remainder were transports.

On the following evening Godard and his men had kept their word. He and his men were dead, and the redoubt was captured. Thirty-five men were still shut up in the fort under the command of Colonel Vinache. They held the fort for two days against the whole Turkish army.

Bonaparte learned of this while he was at the Pyramids. He started for Ramanieh, where he arrived on the 19th.

The Turks, now masters of the fort and the redoubt, had landed their whole artillery. Marmont, who had only eighteen hundred troops of the line, and two hundred sailors composing the nautical legion, with which to oppose the Turks at Alexandria, sent courier after courier to Bonaparte. Fortunately, instead of marching upon Alexandria, as Marmont had feared, or upon Rosetta, as Bonaparte had feared, the Turks with their customary indolence contented themselves with occupying the peninsula, and throwing out to the left of the redoubt a great line of intrenchments bordering upon Lake Madieh. They fortified little mounds some five or six feet in front of the redoubt, placing a thousand men in one and two thousand in another. They had eighteen thousand men in all. But they seemed to have come to Egypt for the sole object of being besieged.

On the 23d Bonaparte ordered the French army, which was now only distant a couple of hours' march from the Turkish army, to advance. The advance-guard, composed of Murat's cavalry and three of General Destaing's battalions, with two pieces formed the centre.

The division of General Rampon, who had Generals Fugière and Lanusse under his orders, was on the left. On the right General Lannes's division advanced along the shores of Lake Madieh.

Davoust, with two squadrons of cavalry and a hundred dromedaries, was placed between Alexandria and the army, with orders to head off Mourad Bey, or any one else who should come to the assistance of the Turks, and to keep communication open between Alexandria and the army.

Kléber was expected, and he was to take command of the reserve. And finally Menou, who had gone toward Rosetta, found himself at dawn near the end of the bar of the Nile, by the ferry which crosses Lake Madieh. The French were within sight of the intrenchments almost before the Turks were aware of their proximity.

Bonaparte formed the columns of attack. General Destaing, who commanded them, marched straight against the fortified hill at the right, while two hundred of Murat's cavalry, stationed between the two hills, left their positions, and circling both sides of the hill to the right, cut off the retreat of the Turks who were attacked by General Destaing.

Meanwhile Lannes marched against the hill on the left, which was defended by two thousand Turks, and Murat sent two hundred more of his cavalry around that hill.

Destaing and Murat attacked at almost the same moment and with equal success. The two hills were carried at the bayonet's point. The fugitive Turks met the French cavalry, and threw themselves into the sea.

Destaing, Lannes, and Murat then marched against the village which formed the centre of the peninsula, and attacked in front. A column left the camp at Aboukir and came to the support of the village. Murat drew his sabre, a thing he never did until the last moment, gave the word to his cavalry, charged the column, and drove it back to Aboukir. Meanwhile Lannes and Destaing captured the village. The Turks fled on all sides only to meet Murat's cavalry as it was returning. The battlefield was already strewn with four or five hundred corpses. The French had only one man wounded. He was a mulatto, a compatriot of my father's, the commander of a squad of the Hercules Guides. The French now found themselves upon the highroad which covered the Turkish front.

Bonaparte had it in his power to box the Turks up in Aboukir, and harass them with bombs and shells while he was awaiting the arrival of Kléber and Régnier with their divisions; but he preferred to deal a decisive blow and have done with them. He ordered the army to march straight at the second line of defence. Lannes and Destaing, supported by Lanusse, still bore the brunt of the battle, and won the honors of the day.

The redoubt which defends Aboukir is the work of the English, and consequently it is constructed on the most scientific plan.

It was now defended by nine or ten thousand Turks. It was connected with the sea by a causeway. As the Turks had not had time to dig far enough in the other direction, it did not connect with the Lake of Madieh. A space some three hundred feet in length remained open, but it was occupied by the enemy and swept by the gunners at one and the same time. Bonaparte ordered an attack to the right and the front. Murat, who was ambushed in a grove of palms, was to attack on the left, and crossing the space where there was no causeway, under fire of the gunners, was to drive the enemy before him. The Turks sent out four detachments of about two thousand men each, when they saw these arrangements, who marched against our troops.

The battle would inevitably be a desperate one, for the Turks realized that they were shut up in the peninsula with the sea before them and a wall of French bayonets behind.

A heavy cannonade directed against the redoubt and the intrenchments of the right was the signal for a fresh attack. General Bonaparte thereupon sent General Fugière forward. He followed the bank, and turned to the right of the Turks. The thirty-second, which was stationed on the left of the hamlet which had recently been captured, was to hold the enemy in check, and sustain the eighteenth.

It was then that the Turks left their intrenchments and came to meet the French. The latter uttered a joyful shout. This was what they wanted. They rushed upon the enemy with fixed bayonets. The Turks discharged their guns first, then their pistols, and finally drew their sabres. The French soldiers, who were not even checked by the triple discharge, closed in upon them with their sabres.

It was not until then that the Turks realized with what kind of men and weapons they had to reckon. With their guns slung over their shoulders and the sabres hanging by their cords they began a hand-to-hand fight, trying to snatch the terrible bayonets from the rifles, which pierced their breasts as they stretched forth their hands to grasp them.

But nothing could stop the eighteenth. They continued to advance at the same pace, driving the Turks before them to the foot of the intrenchments, which they attempted to carry by storm; but there the soldiers were driven back by a hot fire which raked them diagonally. General Fugière, who led the attack, received a bullet in the head in the beginning. The wound was a slight one, and he kept on, and spoke encouragingly to his men. But when a ball carried away his arm he was obliged to stop.

Adjutant-general Lelong, who came up with a battery of the seventy-fifth, made heroic efforts to induce the soldiers to defy this hurricane of fire. Twice he led them up to it and twice he was repulsed. The third time he darted forward and was on the verge of springing over the intrenchments when he fell dead.

Roland, who was standing near Bonaparte, had for a long time been asking for a command of some sort, which the latter hesitated to give him, until at length he felt that the moment had come for a supreme effort. He turned toward him. "Very well, go!" he said to him.

"Thirty-second brigade!" shouted Roland.

And the gallant survivors of Saint-Jean-d'Acre ran off after him, led by their major, Armagnac. Sub-lieutenant Faraud,

recovered from his wound, was in the first rank.

Meanwhile, Brigadier-general Morange had made another attempt; but he was also driven back, leaving thirty men on the glacis and in the trench. The Turks thought that they had conquered. Carried away by their custom of cutting off the heads of the dead, for which they received fifty *paras* apiece, they left the redoubt in disorder, and began the bloody work.

Roland pointed them out to his indignant soldiers.

"All our men are not dead," he cried; "some of them are only wounded. Let us save them."

At that moment Murat caught a glimpse through the smoke of what was going on. He darted forward under the fire of the artillery, passed through it, cut off the redoubt from the village with his cavalry, and fell upon the men who were engaged in the horrible operation of cutting off heads on the other side of the redoubt, while Roland attacked it in front, dashing in among the Turks with his usual reckless daring, where he mowed down the harvesters.

Bonaparte saw that the Turks had been taken at a disadvantage by this unexpected onslaught, and he sent Lannes with two battalions. Lannes attacked the redoubt with his usual impetuosity, on the left face and at the gorge. Pressed thus on all sides the Turks tried to reach the village of Aboukir; but Murat was between the village and the redoubt with his cavalry, and behind him was Roland and the thirty-second brigade, and at their right Lannes and his two divisions.

Their only refuge was the sea. They threw themselves into it wild with terror; for, since they were not in the habit of giving quarter to their prisoners, they preferred the sea, and the chance of reaching their ships, to death at the hands of the Christians whom they despised.

At this juncture the French were masters of the two hills, where they had begun the assault; of the hamlet where the remainder of those who had been defending the hills had taken refuge; of the redoubt which had cost so many brave men their lives. And now they were before the camp, and the Turkish reserve. They fell upon them.

Nothing could stop the French soldiers, who were drunk with the carnage which they had just perpetrated. Murat's cavalry fell upon the pasha's guard like a whirlwind, a simoom, a hurricane.

Ignorant of the result of the battle, Mustapha, when he heard the shouting and uproar, mounted his horse, and placing himself at the head of his *icoglans*, he rushed to meet the French, encountered Murat, fired upon him at close range, and inflicted a slight wound. Murat cut off two of his fingers with the first blow of his sabre. With the second he would have cut off his head, but an Arab threw himself in front of the pasha, received the blow and fell dead. Mustapha gave up his cimeter, and Murat sent him to Bonaparte as a prisoner.

See Gros's magnificent picture.

The remnant of the army took refuge within the fort of Aboukir; the others were killed or drowned.

Never had such annihilation been seen since two armies had marched against each other. Aside from the two hundred Janissaries and the hundred men shut up in the fort, nothing was left of the army of eighteen thousand Turks.

Kléber arrived toward the close of the day. He asked about the battle, and inquired where he could find Bonaparte. Bonaparte was musing out on the most advanced point of Aboukir. He was looking at the gulf which had swallowed up the French fleet—his sole hope of returning to France. Kléber went up to him and took him by the arm; and while Bonaparte's eyes remained veiled and sombre, he exclaimed: "General, you are the greatest man in the world!"

CHAPTER XIX

DEPARTURE

During the year that this eighth crusade lasted—the ninth if we count Saint Louis's double attempt as two—Bonaparte did all that it was humanly possible to do. He took Alexandria, conquered the Mamelukes at Chebrouïss and the Pyramids, took Cairo, achieved the conquest of the Delta, and by means of its marshes completed the conquest of Upper Egypt, took Gaza, Jaffa, and destroyed the Turkish army of Djezzar at Mount Tabor; and finally he annihilated a second Turkish army at Aboukir.

The tri-color had floated triumphantly over the Jordan and the Nile.

But he was ignorant of what was happening in France, and that was why on the evening of his victory of Aboukir he was gazing dreamily at the gulf which had swallowed up his fleet.

He sent for Quartermaster Falou, and questioned him about the battle of Beyrout, the disaster to the flotilla, and the loss of the "Italie," and his presentiment haunted him more persistently than ever. He called Roland in the hope of learning some news.

"My dear Roland," said he, "I greatly desire to open a new career for you."

"What is it?" asked Roland.

"That of a diplomat."

"Oh, what a sad idea that is, general."

"Nevertheless, you must yield to it."

"What! You are not going to allow me to refuse?"

"No."

"Then explain."

"I am going to send you with a flag of truce to Sidney Smith."

"My instructions?"

"You are to find out what is happening in France, and you will try to distinguish the truth from the false in what the commodore tells you, by no means an easy matter."

"I will do my best. What will be the ostensible object of my embassy?"

"An exchange of prisoners. The English have twenty-five of our men; we have two hundred and fifty Turks. We will give them the two hundred and fifty men if they will give us our twenty-five Frenchmen."

"And when am I to start?"

"To-day."

It was the 26th of July.

Roland went and he returned that same evening with a pile of newspapers. Sidney had recognized him as the hero of Saint-Jean-d'Acre, and had offered no objections to telling him what was going on in Europe. Then, as he had read incredulity in Roland's eyes, he had given him all the French, English, and German papers which he had on the "Tiger."

The news which these papers contained was disastrous. The Republic, defeated at Sockah and Magnano, had lost Germany at Sockah and Magnano. Masséna, intrenched in Switzerland, occupied an unassailable position on the Albis. The Appenines had been invaded and the Var threatened.

The next day, when Bonaparte saw Roland, he asked: "Well?"

"Well?" replied the young man.

"I knew that Italy was lost!"

"You will have to take it again."

"We will try," returned Bonaparte. "Call Bourrienne."

Bourrienne was called.

"Ask Berthier where Ganthéaume is," said Bonaparte.

"He is at Ramanieh superintending the construction of the fleet which is to start for Upper Egypt."

"Are you sure?"

"I received a letter from him yesterday."

"I need a brave and reliable messenger," Bonaparte said to Roland; "send for Falou and his dromedary."

Roland went out.

"Write these few words to Alexandria, Bourrienne," continued Bonaparte.

As soon as this is received Admiral Ganthéaume will report to General Bonaparte.

BOURRIENNE.

26th July, 1799.

Ten minutes later Roland returned with Falou and his dromedary.

Bonaparte glanced at the messenger with satisfaction.

"Is your mount in as good a condition as you are?" he asked.

"My dromedary and I, general, are in condition to do seventy-five miles a day."

"I only ask twenty."

"A mere nothing."

"You must carry a letter."

"Where?"

"To Ramanieh."

"It shall be delivered to-night."

"Read the superscription."

"Admiral Ganthéaume."

"Now if you were to lose it—"

"I will not lose it."

"One must foresee everything. Listen to what it says."

"Is it long?"

"Only a sentence."

"That is all right then; what is it?"

As soon as this is received Admiral Ganthéaume will report to General Bonaparte.

"That is easy to remember."

"Then go."

Falou made his dromedary kneel down, climbed upon his hump, and started him off at a trot.

"I am off," he shouted.

And he was in fact already some distance off. The next evening he appeared again.

"The admiral is following me," he shouted.

The admiral arrived during the night. Bonaparte had not retired and Ganthéaume found him writing.

"You will prepare," said Bonaparte, "two frigates, the 'Muiron' and the 'Carrière,' and two smaller vessels, the 'Revanche' and the 'Fortune,' with provisions enough to last forty or fifty men two months. Not a word about it to any one. You are to come with me."

Ganthéaume withdrew, promising not to speak of it.

Bonaparte sent for Murat.

"Italy is lost," said he; "the wretches! They have wasted the fruits of our victories. We must go. Select five hundred men for me." Then, turning to Roland, he added: "You will see that Falou and Faraud are included in the detachment."

Roland bowed assent.

General Kléber, to whom Bonaparte intended to leave the command of the army, was invited to Rosetta, "to confer with the commander-in-chief on matters of the utmost importance."

Bonaparte made an appointment with him which he knew very well he could not keep. He wished, however, to avoid Kléber's reproaches and bitter frankness. He wrote all that he would have said to him, and gave as his reason for not keeping his appointment his fear that the English cruisers might return at any moment.

The vessels destined for Bonaparte were once more to carry Cæsar and his fortune. But this time it was not Cæsar sailing eastward to add Egypt to the conquests of Rome; it was Cæsar revolving in his mind the vast projects which had made the conqueror of the Gauls cross the Rubicon.

He was going back without recoiling at the idea of overturning the government for which he had fought on the 13th Vendémiaire, and which he had sustained on the 18th Fructidor.

A dream of gigantic magnitude had faded away before Saint-Jean-d'Acre. A still vaster vision was forming in his mind as he left Alexandria.

On the 23d of August, a dark and gloomy night, a boat pushed off from the Egyptian shore, and put Bonaparte aboard the "Muiron."

THE END

Transcriber's Note:—

Punctuation errors have been corrected.

The following suspected printer's errors have been addressed.

Page 172. misson changed to mission. (diplomat for this mission)

Page 286. Convenion changed to Convention. (The Convention felt)

[The end of *The Whites and the Blues* by Alexandre Dumas]