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THE BATTLE OF THE STRONG

[A ROMANCE OF TWO KINGDOMS]

By Gilbert Parker

Volume 6.

CHAPTER XXXIX

The bell on the top of the Cohue Royale clattered like the tongue of a scolding fishwife. For it was the fourth of October, and the opening of the Assise d'Heritage.

This particular session of the Court was to proceed with unusual spirit and importance, for after the reading of the King's Proclamation, the Royal Court and the States were to present the formal welcome of the island to Admiral Prince Philip d'Avranche, Duc de Bercy; likewise to offer a bounty to all Jerseymen enlisting under him.

The island was en fete. There had not been such a year of sensations since the Battle of Jersey. Long before chicane--chicane ceased clanging over the Vier Marchi the body of the Court was filled. The Governor, the Bailly, the jurats, the seigneurs and the dames des fiefs, the avocats with their knowledge of the ancient custom of Normandy and the devious inroads made upon it by the customs of Jersey, the military, all were in their places; the officers of the navy had arrived, all save one and he was to be the chief figure of this function. With each arrival the people cheered and the trumpets blared. The islanders in the Vier Marchi turned to the booths for refreshments, or to the printing-machine set up near La Pyramide, and bought halfpenny chapsheets telling of recent defeats of the French; though mostly they told in ebullient words of the sea-fight which had made Philip d'Avranche an admiral, and of his elevation to a sovereign dukedom. The crowds restlessly awaited his coming now.

Inside the Court there was more restlessness still. It was now many minutes beyond the hour fixed. The Bailly whispered to the Governor, the Governor to his aide, and the aide sought the naval officers present; but these could give no explanation of the delay. The Comtesse Chantavoine was in her place of honour beside the Attorney-General--but Prince Philip and his flag-lieutenant came not.

The Comtesse Chantavoine was the one person outwardly unmoved. What she thought, who could tell? Hundreds of eyes scanned her face, yet she seemed unconscious of them, indifferent to them. What would not the Bailly have given for her calmness! What would not the Greffier have given for her importance! She drew every eye by virtue of something which was more than the name of Duchesse de Bercy. The face, the bearing, had an unconscious dignity, a living command and composure: the heritage, perhaps, of a race ever more fighters than courtiers, rather desiring good sleep after good warfare than luxurious peace.

The silence, the tension grew painful. A whole half hour had the Court waited beyond its time. At last, however, cheers arose outside, and all knew that the Prince was coming. Presently the doors were thrown open, two halberdiers stepped inside, and an officer of the Court announced Admiral his Serene Highness Prince Philip d'Avranche, Duc de Bercy.

"Oui-gia, think of that!" said a voice from somewhere in the hall.

Philip heard it, and he frowned, for he recognised Dormy Jamais's voice. Where it came from he knew not, nor did any one; for the daft one was snugly bestowed above a middle doorway in what was half balcony, half cornice.

When Philip had taken his place beside the Comtesse Chantavoine, came the formal opening of the Cour d'Heritage.

The Comtesse's eyes fixed themselves upon Philip. There was that in his manner which puzzled and evaded her clear intuition. Some strange circumstance must have delayed him, for she saw that his flag-lieutenant was disturbed, and this she felt sure was not due to delay alone. She was barely conscious that the Bailly had been addressing Philip, until he had stopped and Philip had risen to reply.

He had scarcely begun speaking when the doors were suddenly thrown open again, and a woman came forward quickly. The instant she entered Philip saw her, and stopped speaking. Every one turned.

It was Guida. In the silence, looking neither to right nor left, she advanced almost to where the Greffier sat, and dropping on her knee and looking up to the Bailly and the jurats, stretched out her hands and cried:

"Haro, haro! A l'aide, mon Prince, on me fait tort!"

If one rose from the dead suddenly to command them to an awed obedience, Jerseymen could not be more at the mercy of the apparition than at the call of one who cries in their midst, "Haro! Haro!"--that ancient relic of the custom of Normandy and Rollo the Dane. To this hour the Jerseyman maketh his cry unto Rollo, and the Royal Court--whose right to respond to this cry was confirmed by King John and afterwards by Charles--must listen, and every one must heed. That cry of Haro makes the workman drop his tools, the woman her knitting, the militiaman his musket, the fisherman his net, the schoolmaster his birch, and the scrivain his babble, to await the judgment of the Royal Court.

Every jurat fixed his eye upon Guida as though she had come to claim his life. The Bailly's lips opened twice as though to speak, but no words came. The Governor sat with hands clinched upon his chairarm. The crowd breathed in gasps of excitement. The Comtesse Chantavoine looked at Philip, looked at Guida, and knew that here was the opening of the scroll she had not been able to unfold. Now she should understand that something which had made the old Duc de Bercy with his last breath say,

Don't be afraid!

Philip stood moveless, his eyes steady, his face bitter, determined. Yet there was in his look, fixed upon Guida, some strange mingling of pity and purpose. It was as though two spirits were fighting in his face for mastery. The Countess touched him upon the arm, but he took no notice. Drawing back in her seat she looked at him and at Guida, as one might watch the balances of justice weighing life and death. She could not read this story, but one glance at the faces of the crowd round her made her aware that here was a tale of the past which all knew in little or in much.

"Haro! haro! A l'aide, mon Prince, on me fait tort!" What did she mean, this woman with the exquisite face, alive with power and feeling, indignation and appeal? To what prince did she cry?--for what aid? who trespassed upon her?

The Bailly now stood up, a frown upon his face. He knew what scandal had said concerning Guida and Philip. He had never liked Guida, for in the first days of his importance she had, for a rudeness upon his part meant as a compliment, thrown his hat--the Lieutenant-Bailly's hat--into the Fauxbie by the Vier Prison. He thought her intrusive thus to stay these august proceedings of the Royal Court, by an appeal for he knew not what.

"What is the trespass, and who the trespasser?" asked the Bailly sternly.

Guida rose to her feet.

"Philip d'Avranche has trespassed," she said. "What Philip d'Avranche, mademoiselle?" asked the Bailly in a rough, ungenerous tone.

"Admiral Philip d'Avranche, known as his Serene Highness the Duc de Bercy, has trespassed on me," she answered.

She did not look at Philip, her eyes were fixed upon the Bailly and the jurats.

The Bailly whispered to one or two jurats. "Wherein is the trespass?" asked the Bailly sharply. "Tell your story."

After an instant's painful pause, Guida told her tale.

"Last night at Plemont," she said in a voice trembling a little at first but growing stronger as she went on, "I left my child, my Guilbert, in his bed, with Dormy Jamais to watch beside him, while I went to my boat which lies far from my hut. I left Dormy Jamais with the child because I was afraid--because I had been afraid, these three days past, that Philip d'Avranche would steal him from me. I was gone but half an hour; it was dark when I returned. I found the door open, I found Dormy Jamais lying unconscious on the floor, and my child's bed empty. My child was gone. He was stolen from me by Philip d'Avranche, Duc de Bercy."

"What proof have you that it was the Duc de Bercy?" asked the Bailly.

"I have told your honour that Dormy Jamais was there. He struck Dormy Jamais to the ground, and rode off with my child."

The Bailly sniffed.

"Dormy Jamais is a simpleton--an idiot."

"Then let the Prince speak," she answered quickly. She turned and looked Philip in the eyes. He did not answer a word. He had not moved since she entered the court-room. He kept his eyes fixed on her, save for one or two swift glances towards the jurats. The crisis of his life had come. He was ready to meet it now: anything would be better than all he had gone through during the past ten days. In mad impulse he had stolen the child, with the wild belief that through it he could reach Guida, could bring her to him. For now this woman who despised him, hated him, he desired more than all else in the world. Ambition has her own means of punishing. For her gifts of place or fortune she puts some impossible hunger in the soul of the victim which leads him at last to his own destruction. With all the world conquered there is still some mystic island of which she whispers, and to gain this her votary risks all--and loses all.

The Bailly saw by Philip's face that Guida had spoken truth. But he whispered with the jurats eagerly, and presently he said with brusque decision:

"Our law of Haro may only apply to trespass upon property. Its intent is merely civil."

Which having said he opened and shut his mouth with gusto, and sat back as though expecting Guida to retire.

"Your law of Haro, monsieur le Bailly!" Guida answered with flashing eyes, her voice ringing out fearlessly. "Your law of Haro! The law of Haro comes from the custom of Normandy, which is the law of Jersey. You make its intent this, you make it that, but nothing can alter the law, and what has been done in its name for generations. Is it so, that if Philip d'Avranche trespass on my land, or my hearth, I may cry Haro, haro! and you will take heed? But when it is blood of my blood, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh that he has wickedly seized; when it is the head I have pillowed on my breast for four years--the child that has known no father, his mother's only companion in her unearned shame, the shame of an outcast--then is it so that your law of Haro may not apply? Messieurs, it is the justice of Haro that I ask, not your lax usage of it. From this Prince Philip I appeal to the spirit of Prince Rollo who made this law. I appeal to the law of Jersey which is the Custom of Normandy. There are precedents enough, as you well know, messieurs. I demand--I demand--my child."

The Bailly and the jurats were in a hopeless quandary. They glanced furtively at Philip. They were half afraid that she was right, and yet

were timorous of deciding against the Prince.

She saw their hesitation. "I call on you to fulfil the law. I have cried Haro, haro! and what I have cried men will hear outside this Court, outside this Isle of Jersey; for I appeal against a sovereign duke of Europe."

The Bailly and the jurats were overwhelmed by the situation. Guida's brain was a hundred times clearer than theirs. Danger, peril to her child, had aroused in her every force of intelligence; she had the daring, the desperation of the lioness fighting for her own.

Philip himself solved the problem. Turning to the bench of jurats, he said quietly:

"She is quite right; the law of Haro is with her. It must apply."

The Court was in a greater maze than ever. Was he then about to restore to Guida her child? After an instant's pause Philip continued:

"But in this case there was no trespass, for the child--is my own."

Every eye in the Cohue Royale fixed itself upon him, then upon Guida, then upon her who was known as the Duchesse de Bercy. The face of the Comtesse Chantavoine was like snow, white and cold. As the words were spoken a sigh broke from her, and there came to Philip's mind that distant day in the council chamber at Bercy when for one moment he was upon his trial; but he did not turn and look at her now. It was all pitiable, horrible; but this open avowal, insult as it was to the Comtesse Chantavoine, could be no worse than the rumours which would surely have reached her one day. So let the game fare on. He had thrown down the glove now, and he could not see the end; he was playing for one thing only--for the woman he had lost, for his own child. If everything went by the board, why, it must go by the board. It all flashed through his brain: to-morrow he must send in his resignation to the Admiralty--so much at once. Then Bercy--come what might, there was work for him to do at Bercy. He was a sovereign duke of Europe, as Guida had said. He would fight for the duchy for his son's sake. Standing there he could feel again the warm cheek of the child upon his own, as last night he felt it riding across the island from Plemont to the village near Mont Orgueil. That very morning he had hurried down to a little cottage in the village and seen it lying asleep, well cared for by a peasant woman. He knew that to-morrow the scandal of the thing would belong to the world, but he was not dismayed. He had tossed his fame as an admiral into the gutter, but Bercy still was left. All the native force, the stubborn vigour, the obdurate spirit of the soil of Jersey of which he was, its arrogant self-will, drove him straight into this last issue. What he had got at so much cost he would keep against all the world. He would--

But he stopped short in his thoughts, for there now at the court-room door stood Detricand, the Chouan chieftain.

He drew his hand quickly across his eyes. It seemed so wild, so fantastic, that of all men, Detricand should be there. His gaze was so fixed that every one turned to see--every one save Guida.

Guida was not conscious of this new figure in the scene. In her heart was fierce tumult. Her hour had come at last, the hour in which she must declare that she was the wife of this man. She had no proofs. No doubt he would deny it now, for he knew how she loathed him. But she must tell her tale.

She was about to address the Bailly, but, as though a pang of pity shot, through her heart, she turned instead and looked at the Comtesse Chantavoine. She could find it in her to pause in compassion for this poor lady, more wronged than herself had been. Their eyes met. One instant's flash of intelligence between the souls of two women, and Guida knew that the look of the Comtesse Chantavoine had said: "Speak for your child."

Thereupon she spoke.

"Messieurs, Prince Philip d'Avranche is my husband."

Every one in the court-room stirred with excitement. Some weak-nerved woman with a child at her breast began to cry, and the little one joined its feeble wail to hers.

"Five years ago," Guida continued, "I was married to Philip d'Avranche by the Reverend Lorenzo Dow in the church of St. Michael's--"

The Bailly interrupted with a grunt. "H'm--Lorenzo Dow is well out of the way--have done."

"May I not then be heard in my own defence?" Guida cried in indignation. "For years I have suffered silently slander and shame. Now I speak for myself at last, and you will not hear me! I come to this court of justice, and my word is doubted ere I can prove the truth. Is it for judges to assail one so? Five years ago I was married secretly, in St. Michael's Church--secretly, because Philip d'Avranche urged it, pleaded for it. An open marriage, he said, would hinder his promotion. We were wedded, and he left me. War broke out. I remained silent according to my promise to him. Then came the time when in the States of Bercy he denied that he had a wife. From the hour I knew he had done so I denied him. My child was born in shame and sorrow, I myself was outcast in this island. But my conscience was clear before Heaven. I took myself and my child out from among you and went to Plemont. I waited, believing that God's justice was surer than man's. At last Philip d'Avranche--my husband--returned here. He invaded my home, and begged me to come with my child to him as his wife--he who had so evilly wronged me, and wronged another more than me. I refused. Then he stole my child from me. You ask for proofs of my marriage. Messieurs, I have no proofs.

"I know not where Lorenzo Dow may be found. The register of St. Michael's Church, as you all know, was stolen. Mr. Shoreham, who witnessed the

marriage, is dead. But you must believe me. There is one witness left, if he will but speak--even the man who married me, the man that for one day called me his wife. I ask him now to tell the truth."

She turned towards Philip, her clear eyes piercing him through and through.

What was going on in his mind neither she nor any in that Court might ever know, for in the pause, the Comtesse Chantavoine rose up, and passing steadily by Philip, came to Guida. Looking her in the eyes with an incredible sorrow, she took her hand, and turned towards Philip with infinite scorn.

A strange, thrilling silence fell upon all the Court. The jurats shifted in their seats with excitement. The Bailly, in a hoarse, dry voice, said:

"We must have proof. There must be record as well as witness."

From near the great doorway came a voice saying: "The record is here," and Detricand stepped forward, in his uniform of the army of the Vendee.

A hushed murmur ran round the room. The jurats whispered to each other.

"Who are you, monsieur?" said the Bailly.

"I am Detricand, Prince of Vaufontaine," he replied, "for whom the Comtesse Chantavoine will vouch," he added in a pained voice, and bowed low to her and to Guida. "I am but this hour landed. I came to Jersey on this very matter."

He did not wait for the Bailly to reply, but began to tell of the death of Lorenzo Dow, and, taking from his pocket the little black journal, opened it and read aloud the record written therein by the dead clergyman. Having read it, he passed it on to the Greffier, who handed it up to the Bailly. Another moment's pause ensued. To the most ignorant and casual of the onlookers the strain was great; to those chiefly concerned it was supreme. The Bailly and the jurats whispered together. Now at last a spirit of justice was roused in them. But the law's technicalities were still to rule.

The Bailly closed the book, and handed it back to the Greffier with the words: "This is not proof though it is evidence."

Guida felt her heart sink within her. The Comtesse Chantavoine, who still held her hand, pressed it, though herself cold as ice with sickness of spirit.

At that instant, and from Heaven knows where--as a bird comes from a bush--a little grey man came quickly among them all, carrying spread open before him a book almost as big as himself. Handing it up to the Bailly, he said:

"Here is the proof, Monsieur le Bailly--here is the whole proof."

The Bailly leaned over and drew up the book. The jurats crowded near and a dozen heads gathered about the open volume.

At last the Bailly looked up and addressed the Court solemnly.

"It is the lost register of St. Michael's," he said. "It contains the record of the marriage of Lieutenant Philip d'Avranche and Guida Landresse de Landresse, both of the Isle of Jersey, by special license of the Bishop of Winchester."

"Precisely so, precisely so," said the little grey figure--the Chevalier Orvillier du Champsavoys de Beaumanoir. Tears ran down his cheeks as he turned towards Guida, but he was smiling too.

Guida's eyes were upon the Bailly. "And the child?" she cried with a broken voice--"the child?"

"The child goes with its mother," answered the Bailly firmly.

DURING ONE YEAR LATER

CHAPTER XL

The day that saw Guida's restitution in the Cohue Royale brought but further trouble to Ranulph Delagarde. The Chevalier had shown him the lost register of St. Michael's, and with a heart less heavy, he left the island once more. Intending to join Detricand in the Vendee, he had scarcely landed at St. Malo when he was seized by a press-gang and carried aboard a French frigate commissioned to ravage the coasts of British America. He had stubbornly resisted the press, but had been knocked on the head, and there was an end on it.

In vain he protested that he was an Englishman. They laughed at him. His French was perfect, his accent Norman, his was a Norman face--evidence enough. If he was not a citizen of France he should be, and he must be. Ranulph decided that it was needless to throw away his life. It was better to make a show of submission. So long as he had not to fight British ships, he could afford to wait. Time enough then for him to take action. When the chance came he would escape this bondage; meanwhile remembering his four years' service with the artillery at Elizabeth Castle, he asked to be made a gunner, and his request was granted.

The Victoire sailed the seas battle-hungry, and presently appeased her appetite among Dutch and Danish privateers. Such excellent work did Ranulph against the Dutchmen, that Richambeau, the captain, gave him a gun for himself, and after they had fought the Danes made him a master-gunner. Of the largest gun on the Victoire Ranulph grew so fond that at

last he called her ma couzaine.

Days and weeks passed, until one morning came the cry of "Land! Land!" and once again Ranulph saw British soil--the tall cliffs of the peninsula of Gaspé. Gaspé--that was the ultima Thule to which Mattingley and Carterette had gone.

Presently, as the Victoire came nearer to the coast, he could see a bay and a great rock in the distance, and, as they bore in now, the rock seemed to stretch out like a vast wall into the gulf. As he stood watching and leaning on ma couzaine, a sailor near him said that the bay and the rock were called Perce.

Perce Bay--that was the exact point for which Elie Mattingley and Carterette had sailed with Sebastian Alixandre. How strange it was! He had bidden Carterette good-bye for ever, yet fate had now brought him to the very spot whither she had gone.

The Rock of Perce was a wall, three hundred feet high, and the wall was an island that had once been a long promontory like a battlement, jutting out hundreds of yards into the gulf. At one point it was pierced by an archway. It was almost sheer; its top was flat and level. Upon the sides there was no verdure; upon the top centuries had made a green field. The wild geese as they flew northward, myriad flocks of gulls, gannets, cormorants, and all manner of fowl of the sea, had builded upon the summit until it was rich with grass and shrubs. The nations of the air sent their legions here to bivouac, and the discord of a hundred languages might be heard far out to sea, far in upon the land. Millions of the races of the air swarmed there; at times the air above was darkened by clouds of them. No fog-bell on a rock-bound coast might warn mariners more ominously than these battalions of adventurers on the Perce Rock.

No human being had ever mounted to this eyrie. Generations of fishermen had looked upon the yellowish-red limestone of the Perce Rock with a valorous eye, but it would seem that not even the tiny clinging hoof of a chamois or wild goat might find a foothold upon the straight sides of it.

Ranulph was roused out of the spell Perce cast over him by seeing the British flag upon a building by the shore of the bay they were now entering. His heart gave a great bound. Yes, it was the English flag defiantly flying. And more--there were two old 12 pounders being trained on the French squadron. For the first time in years a low laugh burst from his lips.

"O mai grand doux," he said in the Jersey patois, "only one man in the world would do that. Only Elie Mattingley!"

At that moment, Mattingley now issued from a wooden fishing-shed with Sebastian Alixandre and three others armed with muskets, and passed to the little fort on which flew the British and Jersey flags. Ranulph heard a guffaw behind. Richambeau, the captain, confronted him.

"That's a big splutter in a little pot, gunner," said he. He put his telescope to his eye. "The Lord protect us," he cried, "they're going to fight my ship!" He laughed again till the tears came. "Son of Peter, but it is droll that--a farce au diable! They have humour, these fisher-folk, eh, gunner?"

"Mattingley will fight you just the same," answered Ranulph coolly.

"Oh ho, you know these people, my gunner?" asked Richambeau.

"All my life," answered Ranulph, "and, by your leave, I will tell you how."

Not waiting for permission, after the manner of his country, he told Richambeau of his Jersey birth and bringing up, and how he was the victim of the pressgang.

"Very good," said Richambeau. "You Jersey folk were once Frenchmen, and now that you're French again, you shall do something for the flag. You see that 12-pounder yonder to the right? Very well, dismount it. Then we'll send in a flag of truce, and parley with this Mattingley, for his jests are worth attention and politeness. There's a fellow at the gun--no, he has gone. Dismount the right-hand gun at one shot. Ready now. Get a good range."

The whole matter went through Ranulph's mind as the captain spoke. If he refused to fire, he would be strung up to the yardarm; if he fired and missed, perhaps other gunners would fire, and once started they might raze the fishing-post. If he dismounted the gun, the matter would probably remain only a jest, for such as yet Richambeau regarded it.

Ranulph ordered the tackle and breechings cast away, had off the apron, pricked a cartridge, primed, bruised the priming, and covered the vent. Then he took his range steadily, quietly. There was a brisk wind blowing from the south--he must allow for that; but the wind was stopped somewhat in its course by the Perch Rock--he must allow for that.

All was ready. Suddenly a girl came running round the corner of the building.

It was Carterette. She was making for the right-hand gun. Ranulph started, the hand that held the match trembled.

"Fire, you fool, or you'll kill the girl!" cried Richambeau.

Ranulph laid a hand on himself as it were. Every nerve in his body tingled, his legs trembled, but his eye was steady. He took the sight once more coolly, then blew on the match. Now the girl was within thirty feet of the gun.

He quickly blew on the match again, and fired. When the smoke cleared away he saw that the gun was dismounted, and not ten feet from it stood Carterette looking at it dazedly.

He heard a laugh behind him. There was Richambeau walking away, telescope under arm, even as the other 12-pounder on shore replied impudently to the gun he had fired.

"A good aim," he heard Richambeau say, jerking a finger backward towards him.

Was it then? said Ranulph to himself; was it indeed? Ba su, it was the last shot he would ever fire against aught English, here or elsewhere.

Presently he saw a boat drawing away with the flag of truce in the hands of a sous-lieutenant. His mind was made up; he would escape to-night. His place was there beside his fellow-countrymen. He motioned away the men of the gun. He would load ma couzaine himself for the last time.

As he sponged the gun he made his plans. Swish-swash the sponge-staff ran in and out--he would try to steal away at dog-watch. He struck the sponge smartly on ma couzaine's muzzle, cleansing it--he would have to slide into the water like a rat and swim very softly to the shore. He reached for a fresh cartridge, and thrust it into the throat of the gun, and as the seam was laid downwards he said to himself that he could swim under water, if discovered as he left the Victoire. As he unstopped the touch-hole and tried with the priming-wire whether the cartridge was home, he was stunned by a fresh thought.

Richambeau would send a squad of men to search for him, and if he was not found they would probably raze the Post, or take its people prisoners. As he put the apron carefully on ma couzaine, he determined that he could not take refuge with the Mattingleys. Neither would it do to make for the woods of the interior, for still Richambeau might revenge himself on the fishing-post. What was to be done? He turned his eyes helplessly on Perce Rock.

As he looked, a new idea came to him. If only he could get to the top of that massive wall, not a hundred fleets could dislodge him. One musket could defeat the forlorn hope of any army. Besides, if he took refuge on the rock, there could be no grudge against Perce village or the Mattingleys, and Richambeau would not injure them.

He eyed the wall closely. The blazing sunshine showed it up in a hard light, and he studied every square yard of it with a telescope. At one point the wall was not quite perpendicular. There were also narrow ledges, lumps of stone, natural steps and little pinnacles which the fingers could grip and where man might rest. Yes, he would try it.

It was the last quarter of the moon, and the neap tide was running low when he let himself softly down into the water from the Victoire. The blanket tied on his head held food kept from his rations, with stone and flint and other things. He was not seen, and he dropped away quietly astern, getting clear of the Victoire while the moon was partially obscured.

Now it was a question when his desertion would be discovered. All he asked was two clear hours. By that time the deed would be done, if he could climb Perce Rock at all.

He touched bottom. He was on Perce sands. The blanket on his head was scarcely wetted. He wrung the water out of his clothes, and ran softly up the shore. Suddenly he was met by a cry of *Qui va la!* and he stopped short at the point of Elie Mattingley's bayonet. "Hush!" said Ranulph, and gave his name.

Mattingley nearly dropped his musket in surprise. He soon knew the tale of Ranulph's misfortunes, but he had not yet been told of his present plans when there came a quick footstep, and Carterette was at her father's side. Unlike Mattingley, she did drop her musket at the sight of Ranulph. Her lips opened, but at first she could not speak--this was more than she had ever dared hope for, since those dark days in Jersey. Ranulph here! She pressed her hands to her heart to stop its throbbing.

Presently she was trembling with excitement at the story of how Ranulph had been pressed at St. Malo, and, all that came after until this very day.

"Go along with Carterette," said Mattingley. "Alixandre is at the house; he'll help you away into the woods."

As Ranulph hurried away with Carterette, he told her his design. Suddenly she stopped short, "Ranulph Delagarde," she said vehemently, "you can't climb Perch Rock. No one has ever done it, and you must not try. Oh, I know you are a great man, but you mustn't think you can do this. You will be safe where we shall hide you. You shall not climb the rock--ah no, *ba su!*"

He pointed towards the Post. "They wouldn't leave a stick standing there if you hid me. No, I'm going to the top of the rock."

"*Man doux terrible!*" she said in sheer bewilderment, and then was suddenly inspired. At last her time had come.

"*Pardingue,*" she said, clutching his arm, "if you go to the top of Perch Rock, so will I!"

In spite of his anxiety he almost laughed.

"But see--but see," he said, and his voice dropped; "you couldn't stay up there with me all alone, *garcon* Carterette. And Richambeau would be firing on you too!"

She was very angry, but she made no reply, and he continued quickly:

"I'll go straight to the rock now. When they miss me there'll be a pot boiling, you may believe. If I get up," he added, "I'll let a string down for a rope you must get for me. Once on top they can't hurt me...."

Eh ben, A bi'tot, gargon Carterette!"

"O my good! O my good!" said the girl with a sudden change of mood. "To think you have come like this, and perhaps--" But she dashed the tears from her eyes, and bade him go on.

The tide was well out, the moon shining brightly. Ranulph reached the point where, if the rock was to be scaled at all, the ascent must be made. For a distance there was shelving where foothold might be had by a fearless man with a steady head and sure balance. After that came about a hundred feet where he would have to draw himself up by juttings and crevices hand over hand, where was no natural pathway. Woe be to him if head grew dizzy, foot slipped, or strength gave out; he would be broken to pieces on the hard sand below. That second stage once passed, the ascent thence to the top would be easier; for though nearly as steep, it had more ledges, and offered fair vantage to a man with a foot like a mountain goat. Ranulph had been aloft all weathers in his time, and his toes were as strong as another man's foot, and surer.

He started. The toes caught in crevices, held on to ledges, glued themselves on to smooth surfaces; the knees clung like a rough-rider's to a saddle; the big hands, when once they got a purchase, fastened like an air-cup.

Slowly, slowly up, foot by foot, yard by yard, until one-third of the distance was climbed. The suspense and strain were immeasurable. But he struggled on and on, and at last reached a sort of flying pinnacle of rock, like a hook for the shields of the gods.

Here he ventured to look below, expecting to see Carterette, but there was only the white sand, and no sound save the long wash of the gulf. He drew a horn of arrack from his pocket and drank. He had two hundred feet more to climb, and the next hundred would be the great ordeal.

He started again. This was travail indeed. His rough fingers, his toes, hard as horn almost, began bleeding. Once or twice he swung quite clear of the wall, hanging by his fingers to catch a surer foothold to right or left, and just getting it sometimes by an inch or less. The tension was terrible. His head seemed to swell and fill with blood: on the top it throbbed till it was ready to burst. His neck was aching horribly with constant looking up, the skin of his knees was gone, his ankles bruised. But he must keep on till he got to the top, or until he fell.

He was fighting on now in a kind of dream, quite apart from all usual feelings of this world. The earth itself seemed far away, and he was toiling among vastnesses, himself a giant with colossal frame and huge, sprawling limbs. It was like a gruesome vision of the night, when the body is an elusive, stupendous mass that falls into space after a confused struggle with immensities. It was all mechanical, vague, almost numb, this effort to overcome a mountain. Yet it was precise and hugely expert too; for though there was a strange mist on the brain, the body felt its way with a singular certainty, as might some molluscan dweller of the sea, sensitive like a plant, intuitive like an animal. Yet at

times it seemed that this vast body overcoming the mountain must let go its hold and slide away into the darkness of the depths.

Now there was a strange convulsive shiver in every nerve--God have mercy, the time was come! . . . No, not yet. At the very instant when it seemed the panting flesh and blood would be shaken off by the granite force repelling it, the fingers, like long antennae, touched horns of rock jutting out from ledges on the third escarpment of the wall. Here was the last point of the worst stage of the journey. Slowly, heavily, the body drew up to the shelf of limestone, and crouched in an inert bundle. There it lay for a long time.

While the long minutes went by, a voice kept calling up from below; calling, calling, at first eagerly, then anxiously, then with terror. By and by the bundle of life stirred, took shape, raised itself, and was changed into a man again, a thinking, conscious being, who now understood the meaning of this sound coming up from the earth below--or was it the sea? A human voice had at last pierced the awful exhaustion of the deadly labour, the peril and strife, which had numbed the brain while the body, in its instinct for existence, still clung to the rocky ledges. It had called the man back to earth--he was no longer a great animal, and the rock a monster with skin and scales of stone.

"Ranulph! Maitre Ranulph! Ah, Ranulph!" called the voice.

Now he knew, and he answered down: "All right, all right, garche Carterette!"

"Are you at the top?"

"No, but the rest is easy."

"Hurry, hurry, Ranulph. If they should come before you reach the top!"

"I'll soon be there."

"Are you hurt, Ranulph?"

"No, but my fingers are in rags. I am going now. A bi'tot, Carterette!"

"Ranulph!"

"Sh, 'sh, do not speak. I am starting."

There was silence for what seemed hours to the girl below. Foot by foot the man climbed on, no less cautious because the ascent was easier, for he was now weaker. But he was on the monster's neck now, and soon he should set his heel on it: he was not to be shaken off.

At last the victorious moment came. Over a jutting ledge he drew himself up by sheer strength and the rubber-like grip of his lacerated fingers, and now he lay flat and breathless upon the ground.

How soft and cool it was! This was long sweet grass touching his face, making a couch like down for the battered, wearied body. Surely such travail had been more than mortal. And what was this vast fluttering over his head, this million-voiced discord round him, like the buffetings and cries of spirits welcoming another to their torment? He raised his head and laughed in triumph. These were the cormorants, gulls, and gannets on the Perch Rock.

Legions of birds circled over him with cries so shrill that at first he did not hear Carterette's voice calling up to him. At last, however, remembering, he leaned over the cliff and saw her standing in the moonlight far below.

Her voice came up to him indistinctly because of the clatter of the birds. "Maitre Ranulph! Ranulph!" She could not see him, for this part of the rock was in shadow.

"Ah bah, all right!" he said, and taking hold of one end of the twine he had brought, he let the roll fall. It dropped almost at Carterette's feet. She tied to the end of it three loose ropes she had brought from the Post. He drew them up quickly, tied them together firmly, and let the great coil down. Ranulph's bundle, a tent and many things Carterette had brought were drawn up.

"Ranulph! Ranulph!" came Carterette's voice again.

"Garcon Carterette!"

"You must help Sebastian Alixandre up," she said.

"Sebastian Alixandre--is he there? Why does he want to come?"

"That is no matter," she called softly. "He is coming. He has the rope round his waist. Pull away!" It was better, Ranulph thought to himself, that he should be on Perch Rock alone, but the terrible strain had bewildered him, and he could make no protest now.

"Don't start yet," he called down; "I'll pull when all's ready."

He fell back from the edge to a place in the grass where, tying the rope round his body, and seating himself, he could brace his feet against a ledge of rock. Then he pulled on the rope. It was round Carterette's waist!

Carterette had told her falsehood without shame, for she was of those to whom the end is more than the means. She began climbing, and Ranulph pulled steadily. Twice he felt the rope suddenly jerk when she lost her footing, but it came in evenly still, and he used a nose of rock as a sort of winch.

The climber was nearly two-thirds of the way up when a cannon-shot boomed out over the water, frightening again the vast covey of birds which shrieked and honked till the air was a maelstrom of cries. Then came

another cannon-shot.

Ranulph's desertion was discovered. The fight was begun between a single Jersey shipwright and a French war-ship.

His strength, however, could not last much longer. Every muscle of his body had been strained and tortured, and even this lighter task tried him beyond endurance. His legs stiffened against the ledge of rock, the tension numbed his arms. He wondered how near Alixandre was to the top. Suddenly there was a pause, then a heavy jerk. Love of God--the rope was shooting through his fingers, his legs were giving way! He gathered himself together, and then with teeth, hands, and body rigid with enormous effort, he pulled and pulled. Now he could not see. A mist swam before his eyes. Everything grew black, but he pulled on and on.

He never knew how the climber reached the top. But when the mist cleared away from his eyes, Carterette was bending over him, putting rum to his lips.

"Carterette-garcon Carterette!" he murmured, amazed. Then as the truth burst upon him he shook his head in a troubled sort of way.

"What a cat I was!" said Carterette. "What a wild cat I was to make you haul me up! It was bad for me with the rope round me, it must have been awful for you, my poor esmanus--poor scarecrow Ranulph."

Scarecrow indeed he looked. His clothes were nearly gone, his hair was tossed and matted, his eyes bloodshot, his big hands like pieces of raw meat, his feet covered with blood.

"My poor scarecrow!" she repeated, and she tenderly wiped the blood from his face where his hands had touched it. Meanwhile bugle-calls and cries of command came up to them, and in the first light of morning they could see French officers and sailors, Mattingley, Alixandre, and others, hurrying to and fro.

When day came clear and bright, it was known that Carterette as well as Ranulph had vanished. Mattingley shook his head stoically, but Richambeau on the Victoire was as keen to hunt down one Jersey-Englishman as he had ever been to attack an English fleet. More so, perhaps.

Meanwhile the birds kept up a wild turmoil and shrieking. Never before had any one heard them so clamorous. More than once Mattingley had looked at Perch Rock curiously, but whenever the thought of it as a refuge came to him, he put it away. No, it was impossible.

Yet, what was that? Mattingley's heart thumped. There were two people on the lofty island wall--a man and a woman. He caught the arm of a French officer near him. "Look, look!" he said. The officer raised his glass.

"It's the gunner," he cried and handed the glass to the old man.

"It's Carterette," said Mattingley in a hoarse voice. "But it's not possible. It's not possible," he added helplessly. "Nobody was ever there. My God, look at it--look at it!"

It was a picture indeed. A man and a woman were outlined against the clear air, putting up a tent as calmly as though on a lawn, thousands of birds wheeling over their heads, with querulous cries.

A few moments later, Elie Mattingley was being rowed swiftly to the Victoire, where Richambeau was swearing viciously as he looked through his telescope. He also had recognised the gunner.

He was prepared to wipe out the fishing-post if Mattingley did not produce Ranulph--well, "here was Ranulph duly produced and insultingly setting up a tent on this sheer rock, with some snippet of the devil," said Richambeau, and defying a great French war-ship. He would set his gunners to work. If he only had as good a marksman as Ranulph himself, the deserter should drop at the first shot "death and the devil take his impudent face!"

He was just about to give the order when Mattingley was brought to him. The old man's story amazed him beyond measure.

"It is no man, then!" said Richambeau, when Mattingley had done. "He must be a damned fly to do it. And the girl--sacre moi! he drew her up after him. I'll have him down out of that though, or throw up my flag," he added, and turning fiercely, gave his orders.

For hours the Victoire bombarded the lonely rock from the north. The white tent was carried away, but the cannon-balls flew over or merely battered the solid rock, the shells were thrown beyond, and no harm was done. But now and again the figure of Ranulph appeared, and a half-dozen times he took aim with his musket at the French soldiers on the shore. Twice his shots took effect; one man was wounded, and one killed. Then whole companies of marines returned a musketry fire at him, to no purpose. At his ease he hid himself in the long grass at the edge of the cliff, and picked off two more men.

Here was a ridiculous thing: one man and a slip of a girl fighting and defying a battle-ship. The smoke of battle covered miles of the great gulf. Even the seabirds shrieked in ridicule.

This went on for three days at intervals. With a fine chagrin Richambeau and his men saw a bright camp-fire lighted on the rock, and knew that Ranulph and the girl were cooking their meals in peace. A flag-staff too was set up, and a red cloth waved defiantly in the breeze. At last Richambeau, who had watched the whole business from the deck of the Victoire, burst out laughing, and sent for Elie Mattingley. "Come, I've had enough," said Richambeau.

"There never was a wilder jest, and I'll not spoil the joke. He has us on his toasting-fork. He shall have the honour of a flag of truce."

And so it was that the French battle-ship sent a flag of truce to the foot of Perch Rock, and a French officer, calling up, gave his captain's word of honour that Ranulph should suffer nothing at the hands of a court-martial, and that he should be treated as an English prisoner of war, not as a French deserter.

There was no court-martial. After Ranulph, at Richambeau's command, had told the tale of the ascent, the Frenchman said:

"No one but an Englishman could be fool enough to try such a thing, and none but a fool could have had the luck to succeed. But even a fool can get a woman to follow him, and so this flyaway followed you, and--"

Carterette made for Richambeau as though to scratch his eyes out, but Ranulph held her back. "--And you are condemned, gunner," continued Richambeau dryly, "to marry the said maid before sundown, or be carried out to sea a prisoner of war." So saying, he laughed, and bade them begone to the wedding.

Ranulph left Richambeau's ship bewildered and perturbed. For hours he paced the shore, and at last his thoughts began to clear. The new life he had led during the last few months had brought many revelations. He had come to realise that there are several sorts of happiness, but that all may be divided into two kinds: the happiness of doing good to ourselves, and that of doing good to others. It opened out clearly to him now as he thought of Carterette in the light of Richambeau's coarse jest.

For years he had known in a sort of way that Carterette preferred him to any other man. He knew now that she had remained single because of him. For him her impatience had been patience, her fiery heart had spilled itself in tenderness for his misfortunes. She who had lightly tossed lovers aside, her coquetry appeased, had to himself shown sincerity without coquetry, loyalty without selfishness. He knew well that she had been his champion in dark days, that he had received far more from her than he had ever given--even of friendship. In his own absorbing love for Guida Landresse, during long years he had been unconsciously blind to a devotion which had lived on without hope, without repining, with untiring cheerfulness.

In those three days spent on the top of the Perch Rock how blithe garcon Carterette had been! Danger had seemed nothing to her. She had the temper of a man in her real enjoyment of the desperate chances of life. He had never seen her so buoyant; her animal spirits had never leapt so high. And yet, despite the boldness which had sent her to the top of Perch Rock with him, there had been in her whole demeanour a frank modesty free from self-consciousness. She could think for herself, she was sure of herself, and she would go to the ends of the earth for him. Surely he had not earned such friendship, such affection.

He recalled how, the night before, as he sat by their little camp-fire, she had come and touched him on the shoulder, and, looking down at him, said:

"I feel as if I was beginning my life all over again, don't you, Maitre Ranulph?"

Her black eyes had been fixed on his, and the fire in them was as bright and full of health and truth as the fire at his feet.

And he had answered her: "I think I feel that too, garcon Carterette."

To which she had replied: "It isn't hard to forget here--not so very hard, is it?"

She did not mean Guida, nor what he had felt for Guida, but rather the misery of the past. He had nodded his head in reply, but had not spoken; and she, with a quick: "A bi'tot," had taken her blanket and gone to that portion of the rock set apart for her own. Then he had sat by the fire thinking through the long hours of night until the sun rose. That day Richambeau had sent his flag of truce, and the end of their stay on Perch Rock was come.

Yes, he would marry Carterette. Yet he was not disloyal, even in memory. What had belonged to Guida belonged to her for ever, belonged to a past life with which henceforth he should have naught to do. What had sprung up in his heart for Carterette belonged to the new life. In this new land there was work to do--what might he not accomplish here? He realised that within one life a man may still live several lives, each loyal and honest after its kind. A fate stronger than himself had brought him here; and here he would stay with fate. It had brought him to Carterette, and who could tell what good and contentment might not yet come to him, and how much to her!

That evening he went to Carterette and asked her to be his wife. She turned pale, and, looking up into his eyes with a kind of fear, she said brokenly:

"It's not because you feel you must? It's not because you know I love you, Ranulph--is it? It's not for that alone?"

"It is because I want you, garcon Carterette," he answered tenderly, "because life will be nothing without you."

"I am so happy--par made, I am so happy!" she answered, and she hid her face on his breast.

CHAPTER XLI

Detricand, Prince of Vaufontaine, was no longer in the Vendee. The whole of Brittany was in the hands of the victorious Hoche, the peasants were disbanded, and his work for a time at least was done.

On the same day of that momentous scene in the Cohue Royale when Guida was vindicated, Detricand had carried to Granville the Comtesse Chantavoine, who presently was passed over to the loving care of her kinsman General Grandjon-Larisse. This done, he proceeded to England.

From London he communicated with Grandjon-Larisse, who applied himself to secure from the Directory leave for the Chouan chieftain to return to France, with amnesty for his past "rebellion." This was got at last through the influence of young Bonaparte himself. Detricand was free now to proceed against Philip.

He straightway devoted himself to a thing conceived on the day that Guida was restored to her rightful status as a wife. His purpose now was to wrest from Philip the duchy of Bercy. Philip was heir by adoption only, and the inheritance had been secured at the last by help of a lie--surely his was a righteous cause!

His motives had not their origin in hatred of Philip alone, nor in desire for honours and estates for himself, nor in racial antagonism, for had he not been allied with England in this war against the Government? He hated Philip the man, but he hated still more Philip the usurper who had brought shame to the escutcheon of Bercy. There was also at work another and deeper design to be shown in good time. Philip had retired from the English navy, and gone back to his duchy of Bercy. Here he threw himself into the struggle with the Austrians against the French. Received with enthusiasm by the people, who as yet knew little or nothing of the doings in the Cohue Royale, he now took over command of the army and proved himself almost as able in the field as he had been at sea. Of these things Detricand knew, and knew also that the lines were closing in round the duchy; that one day soon Bonaparte would send a force which should strangle the little army and its Austrian allies. The game then would be another step nearer the end. Free to move at will, he visited the Courts of Prussia, Russia, Spain, Italy, and Austria, and laid before them his claims to the duchy, urging an insistence on its neutrality, and a trial of his cause against Philip. Ceaselessly, adroitly, with persistence and power, he toiled towards his end, the way made easier by tales told of his prowess in the Vendee. He had offers without number to take service in foreign armies, but he was not to be tempted. Gossip of the Courts said that there was some strange romance behind this tireless pursuit of an inheritance, but he paid no heed. If at last there crept over Europe wonderful tales of Detricand's past life in Jersey, of the real Duchesse de Bercy, and of the new Prince of Vaufontaine, Detricand did not, or feigned not to, hear them; and the Comtesse Chantavoine had disappeared from public knowledge. The few who guessed his romance were puzzled to understand his cause: for if he dispossessed Philip, Guida must also be dispossessed. This, certainly, was not lover-like or friendly.

But Detricand was not at all puzzled; his mind and purpose were clear. Guida should come to no injury through him--Guida who, as they left the Cohue Royale that day of days, had turned on him a look of heavenly trust and gratitude; who, in the midst of her own great happenings, found time to tell him by a word how well she knew he had kept his promise to her, even beyond belief. Justice for her was now the supreme and immediate

object of his life. There were others ready also to care for France, to fight for her, to die for her, to struggle towards the hour when the King should come to his own; but there was only one man in the world who could achieve Guida's full justification, and that was himself, Detricand of Vaufontaine.

He was glad to turn to the Chevalier's letters from Jersey. It was from the Chevalier's lips he had learned the whole course of Guida's life during the four years of his absence from the island. It was the Chevalier who drew for him pictures of Guida in her new home, none other than the house of Elie Mattingley, which the Royal Court having confiscated now handed over to her as an act of homage. The little world of Jersey no longer pointed the finger of scorn at Guida Landresse de Landresse, but bent the knee to Princess Guida d'Avranche.

Detricand wrote many letters to the Chevalier, and they with their cheerful and humorous allusions were read aloud to Guida--all save one concerning Philip. Writing of himself to the Chevalier on one occasion, he laid bare with a merciless honesty his nature and his career. Concerning neither had he any illusions.

I do not mistake myself, Chevalier [he wrote], nor these late doings of mine. What credit shall I take to myself for coming to place and some little fame? Everything has been with me: the chance of inheritance, the glory of a cause as hopeless as splendid, and more splendid because hopeless; and the luck of him who loads the dice--for all my old comrades, the better men, are dead, and I, the least of them all, remain, having even outlived the cause. What praise shall I take for this? None--from all decent fellows of the earth, none at all. It is merely laughable that I should be left, the monument of a sacred loyalty greater than the world has ever known.

I have no claims--But let me draw the picture, dear Chevalier. Here was a discredited, dissolute fellow whose life was worth a pin to nobody. Tired of the husks and the swine, and all his follies grown stale by over-use, he takes the advice of a good gentleman, and joins the standard of work and sacrifice. What greater luxury shall man ask? If this be not running the full scale of life's enjoyment, pray you what is? The world loves contrasts. The deep-dyed sinner raising the standard of piety is picturesque. If, charmed by his own new virtues, he is constant in his enthusiasm, behold a St. Augustine! Everything is with the returned prodigal--the more so if he be of the notorious Vaufontaines, who were ever saints turned sinners, or sinners turned saints.

Tell me, my good friend, where is room for pride in me? I am getting far more out of life than I deserve; it is not well that you and others should think better of me than I do of myself. I do not pretend that I dislike it, it is as balm to me. But it would seem that the world is monstrously unjust. One day when I'm grown old--I cannot imagine what else Fate has spared me for--I shall write the Diary of a Sinner, the whole truth. I shall tell how when my peasant fighters were kneeling round me praying for success, even

thanking God for me, I was smiling in my glove--in scorn of myself, not of them, Chevalier, no,--no, not of them! The peasant's is the true greatness. Everything is with the aristocrat; he has to kick the great chances from his path; but the peasant must go hunting them in peril. Hardly snatching sustenance from Fate, the peasant fights into greatness; the aristocrat may only win to it by rejecting Fate's luxuries. The peasant never escapes the austere teaching of hard experience, the aristocrat the languor of good fortune. There is the peasant and there am I. Voila! enough of Detricand of Vaufontaine. . . . The Princess Guida and the child, are they--

So the letter ran, and the Chevalier read it aloud to Guida up to the point where her name was writ. Afterwards Guida would sit and think of what Detricand had said, and of the honesty of nature that never allowed him to deceive himself. It pleased her also to think she had in some small way helped a man to the rehabilitation of his life. He had said that she had helped him, and she believed him; he had proved the soundness of his aims and ambitions; his career was in the world's mouth.

The one letter the Chevalier did not read to Guida referred to Philip. In it Detricand begged the Chevalier to hold himself in readiness to proceed at a day's notice to Paris.

So it was that when, after months of waiting, the Chevalier suddenly left St. Heliers to join Detricand, Guida did not know the object of his journey. All she knew was that he had leave from the Directory to visit Paris. Imagining this to mean some good fortune for him, with a light heart she sent him off in charge of Jean Touzel, who took him to St. Malo in the *Hardi Biaou*, and saw him safely into the hands of an escort from Detricand.

CHAPTER XLII

Three days later there was opened in one of the chambers of the Emperor's palace at Vienna a Congress of four nations--Prussia, Russia, Austria, and Sardinia. Detricand's labours had achieved this result at last. Grandjon-Larisse, his old enemy in battle, now his personal friend and colleague in this business, had influenced Napoleon, and the Directory through him, to respect the neutrality of the duchy of Bercy, for which the four nations of this Congress declared. Philip himself little knew whose hand had secured the neutrality until summoned to appear at the Congress, to defend his rights to the title and the duchy against those of Detricand Prince of Vaufontaine. Had he known that Detricand was behind it all he would have fought on to the last gasp of power and died on the battle-field. He realised now that such a fate was not for him--that he must fight, not on the field of battle like a prince, but in a Court of Nations like a doubtful claimant of sovereign honours.

His whole story had become known in the duchy, and though it begot no

feeling against him in war-time, now that Bercy was in a neutral zone of peace there was much talk of the wrongs of Guida and the Countess Chantavoine. He became moody and saturnine, and saw few of his subjects save the old Governor-General and his whilom enemy, now his friend, Count Carignan Damour. That at last he should choose to accompany him to Vienna the man who had been his foe during the lifetime of the old Duke, seemed incomprehensible. Yet, to all appearance, Damour was now Philip's zealous adherent. He came frankly repenting his old enmity, and though Philip did not quite believe him, some perverse temper, some obliquity of vision which overtakes the ablest minds at times, made him almost eagerly accept his new partisan. One thing Philip knew: Damour had no love for Detricand, who indeed had lately sent him word that for his work in sending Fouche's men to attempt his capture in Bercy, he would have him shot, if the Court of Nations upheld his rights to the duchy. Damour was able, even if Damour was not honest. Damour, the able, the implacable and malignant, should accompany him to Vienna.

The opening ceremony of the Congress was simple, but it was made notable by the presence of the Emperor of Austria, who addressed a few words of welcome to the envoys, to Philip, and, very pointedly, to the representative of the French Nation, the aged Duc de Mauban, who, while taking no active part in the Congress, was present by request of the Directory. The Duke's long residence in Vienna and freedom from share in the civil war in France had been factors in the choice of him when the name was submitted to the Directory by General Grandjon-Larisse, upon whom in turn it had been urged by Detricand.

The Duc de Mauban was the most marked figure of the Court, the Emperor not excepted. Clean shaven, with snowy linen and lace, his own natural hair, silver white, tied in a queue behind, he had large eloquent wondering eyes that seemed always looking, looking beyond the thing he saw. At first sight of him at his court, the Emperor had said: "The stars have frightened him." No fanciful supposition, for the Duc de Mauban was as well known an astronomer as student of history and philanthropist.

When the Emperor mentioned de Mauban's name Philip wondered where he had heard it before. Something in the sound of it was associated with his past, he knew not how. He had a curious feeling too that those deliberate, searching dark eyes saw the end of this fight, this battle of the strong. The face fascinated him, though it awed him. He admired it, even as he detested the ardent strength of Detricand's face, where the wrinkles of dissipation had given way to the bronzed carven look of the war-beaten soldier.

It was fair battle between these two, and there was enough hatred in the heart of each to make the fight deadly. He knew--and he had known since that day, years ago, in the Place du Vier Prison--that Detricand loved the girl whom he himself had married and dishonoured. He felt also that Detricand was making this claim to the duchy more out of vengeance than from desire to secure the title for himself. He read the whole deep scheme: how Detricand had laid his mine at every Court in Europe to bring him to this pass.

For hours Philip's witnesses were examined, among them the officers of his duchy and Count Carignan Damour. The physician of the old Duke of Bercy was examined, and the evidence was with Philip. The testimony of Dalbarade, the French ex-Minister of Marine, was read and considered. Philip's story up to the point of the formal signature by the old Duke was straightforward and clear. So far the Court was in his favour.

Detricand, as natural heir of the duchy, combated each step in the proceedings from the stand-point of legality, of the Duke's fatuity concerning Philip, and his personal hatred of the House of Vaufontaine. On the third day, when the Congress would give its decision, Detricand brought the Chevalier to the palace. At the opening of the sitting he requested that Damour be examined again. The Count was asked what question had been put to Philip immediately before the deeds of inheritance were signed. It was useless for Damour to evade the point, for there were other officers of the duchy present who could have told the truth. Yet this truth, of itself, need not ruin Philip. It was no phenomenon for a prince to have one wife unknown, and, coming to the throne, to take to himself another more exalted.

Detricand was hoping that the nice legal sense of mine and thine should be suddenly weighted in his favour by a prepared tour de force. The sympathies of the Congress were largely with himself, for he was of the order of the nobility, and Philip's descent must be traced through centuries of yeoman blood; yet there was the deliberate adoption by the Duke to face, with the formal assent of the States of Bercy, but little lessened in value by the fact that the French Government had sent its emissaries to Bercy to protest against it. The Court had come to a point where decision upon the exact legal merits of the case was difficult.

After Damour had testified to the question the Duke asked Philip when signing the deeds at Bercy, Detricand begged leave to introduce another witness, and brought in the Chevalier. Now he made his great appeal. Simply, powerfully, he told the story of Philip's secret marriage with Guida, and of all that came after, up to the scene in the Cohue Royale when the marriage was proved and the child given back to Guida; when the Countess Chantavoine, turning from Philip, acknowledged to Guida the justice of her claim. He drove home the truth with bare unvarnished power--the wrong to Guida, the wrong to the Countess, the wrong to the Dukedom of Bercy, to that honour which should belong to those in high estate. Then at the last he told them who Guida was: no peasant girl, but the granddaughter of the Sieur Larchant de Mauprat of de Mauprats of Chambéry: the granddaughter of an exile indeed, but of the noblest blood of France.

The old Duc de Mauban fixed his look on him intently, and as the story proceeded his hand grasped the table before him in strong emotion. When at last Detricand turned to the Chevalier and asked him to bear witness to the truth of what he had said, the Duke, in agitation, whispered to the President.

All that Detricand had said moved the Court powerfully, but when the

withered little flower of a man, the Chevalier, told in quaint brief sentences the story of the Sieur de Mauprat, his sufferings, his exile, and the nobility of his family, which had indeed, far back, come of royal stock, and then at last of Guida and the child, more than one member of the Court turned his head away with misty eyes.

It remained for the Duc de Mauban to speak the word which hastened and compelled the end. Rising in his place, he addressed to the Court a few words of apology, inasmuch as he was without real power there, and then he turned to the Chevalier.

"Monsieur le chevalier," said he, "I had the honour to know you in somewhat better days for both of us. You will allow me to greet you here with my profound respect. The Sieur Larchant de Mauprat"--he turned to the President, his voice became louder--"the Sieur de Mauprat was my friend. He was with me upon the day I married the Duchess Guidabaldine. Trouble, exile came to him. Years passed, and at last in Jersey I saw him again. It was the very day his grandchild was born. The name given to her was Guidabaldine--the name of the Duchesse de Mauban. She was Guidabaldine Landresse de Landresse, she is my godchild. There is no better blood in France than that of the de Mauprats of Chambery, and the grandchild of my friend, her father being also of good Norman blood, was worthy to be the wife of any prince in Europe. I speak in the name of our order, I speak for Frenchmen, I speak for France. If Detricand, Prince of Vaufontaine, be not secured in his right of succession to the dukedom of Bercy, France will not cease to protest till protest hath done its work. From France the duchy of Bercy came. It was the gift of a French king to a Frenchman, and she hath some claims upon the courtesy of the nations."

For a moment after he took his seat there was absolute silence. Then the President wrote upon a paper before him, and it was passed to each member of the Court sitting with him. For a moment longer there was nothing heard save the scratching of a quill. Philip recalled that day at Bercy when the Duke stooped and signed his name upon the deed of adoption and succession three times--three fateful times.

At last the President, rising in his place, read the pronouncement of the Court: that Detricand, Prince of Vaufontaine, be declared true inheritor of the duchy of Bercy, the nations represented here confirming him in his title.

The President having spoken, Philip rose, and, bowing to the Congress with dignity and composure, left the chamber with Count Carignan Damour.

As he passed from the portico into the grounds of the palace, a figure came suddenly from behind a pillar and touched him on the arm. He turned quickly, and received upon the face a blow from a glove.

The owner of the glove was General Grandjon-Larisse.

CHAPTER XLIII

"You understand, monsieur?" said Grandjon-Larisse.

"Perfectly--and without the glove, monsieur le general," answered Philip quietly. "Where shall my seconds wait upon you?" As he spoke he turned with a slight gesture towards Damour.

"In Paris, monsieur, if it please you."

"I should have preferred it here, monsieur le general--but Paris, if it is your choice."

"At 22, Rue de Mazarin, monsieur." Then he made an elaborate bow to Philip. "I bid you good-day, monsieur."

"Monseigneur, not monsieur," Philip corrected. "They may deprive me of my duchy, but I am still Prince Philip d'Avranche. I may not be robbed of my adoption."

There was something so steady, so infrangible in Philip's composure now, that Grandjon-Larisse, who had come to challenge a great adventurer, a marauder of honour, found his furious contempt checked by some integral power resisting disdain. He intended to kill Philip--he was one of the most expert swordsmen in France--yet he was constrained to respect a composure not sangfroid and a firmness in misfortune not bravado. Philip was still the man who had valiantly commanded men; who had held of the high places of the earth. In whatever adventurous blood his purposes had been conceived, or his doubtful plans accomplished, he was still, stripped of power, a man to be reckoned with: resolute in his course once set upon, and impulsive towards good as towards evil. He was never so much worth respect as when, a dispossessed sovereign with an empty title, discountenanced by his order, disbarred his profession, he held himself ready to take whatever penalty now came.

In the presence of General Grandjon-Larisse, with whom was the might of righteous vengeance, he was the more distinguished figure. To Philip now there came the cold quiet of the sinner, great enough to rise above physical fear, proud enough to say to the world: "Come, I pay the debt I owe. We are quits. You have no favours to give, and I none to take. You have no pardon to grant, and I none to ask."

At parting Grandjon-Larisse bowed to Philip with great politeness, and said: "In Paris then, monsieur le prince."

Philip bowed his head in assent.

When they met again, it was at the entrance to the Bois de Boulogne near the Maillot gate.

It was a damp grey morning immediately before sunrise, and at first there was scarce light enough for the combatants to see each other perfectly,

but both were eager and would not delay.

As they came on guard the sun rose. Philip, where he stood, was full in its light. He took no heed, and they engaged at once. After a few passes Grandjon-Larisse said: "You are in the light, monseigneur; the sun shines full upon you," and he pointed to the shade of a wall near by. "It is darker there."

"One of us must certainly be in the dark-soon," answered Philip grimly, but he removed to the wall. From the first Philip took the offensive. He was more active, and he was quicker and lighter of fence than his antagonist. But Grandjon-Larisse had the surer eye, and was invincibly certain of hand and strong of wrist. At length Philip wounded his opponent slightly in the left breast, and the seconds came forward to declare that honour was satisfied. But neither would listen or heed; their purpose was fixed to fight to the death. They engaged again, and almost at once the Frenchman was slightly wounded in the wrist. Suddenly taking the offensive and lunging freely, Grandjon-Larisse drove Philip, now heated and less wary, backwards upon the wall. At last, by a dexterous feint, he beat aside Philip's guard and drove the sword through his right breast at one fierce lunge.

With a moan Philip swayed and fell forward into the arms of Damour, still grasping his weapon. Grandjon-Larisse stooped to the injured man. Unloosing his fingers from the sword, Philip stretched up a hand to his enemy.

"I am hurt to death," he said. "Permit my compliments to the best swordsman I have ever known." Then with a touch of sorry humour he added: "You cannot doubt their sincerity."

Grandjon-Larisse was turning away when Philip called him back. "Will you carry my profound regret to the Countess Chantavoine?" he whispered. "Say that it lies with her whether Heaven pardon me."

Grandjon-Larisse hesitated an instant, then answered:

"Those who are in heaven, monseigneur, know best what Heaven may do."

Philip's pale face took on a look of agony. "She is dead--she is dead!" he gasped.

Grandjon-Larisse inclined his head, then after a moment, gravely said:

"What did you think was left for a woman--for a Chantavoine? It is not the broken heart that kills, but broken pride, monseigneur."

So saying, he bowed again to Philip and turned upon his heel.

Philip lay on a bed in the unostentatious lodging in the Rue de Vaugirard where Damour had brought him. The surgeon had pronounced the wound mortal, giving him but a few hours to live. For long after he was gone Philip was silent, but at length he said "You heard what Grandjon-Larisse said--It is broken pride that kills, Damour." Then he asked for pen, ink, and paper. They were brought to him. He tried the pen upon the paper, but faintness suddenly seized him, and he fell back unconscious.

When he came to himself he was alone in the room. It was cold and cheerless--no fire on the hearth, no light save that flaring from a lamp in the street outside his window. He rang the bell at his hand. No one answered. He called aloud: "Damour! Damour!"

Damour was far beyond earshot. He had bethought him that now his place was in Bercy, where he might gather up what fragments of good fortune remained, what of Philip's valuables might be secured. Ere he had fallen back insensible, Philip, in trying the pen, had written his own name on a piece of paper. Above this Damour wrote for himself an order upon the chamberlain of Bercy to enter upon Philip's private apartments in the castle; and thither he was fleeing as Philip lay dying in the dark room of the house in the Rue de Vaugirard.

The woman of the house, to whose care Philip was passed over by Damour, had tired of watching, and had gone to spend one of his gold pieces for supper with her friends.

Meanwhile in the dark comfortless room, the light from without flickering upon his blanched face, Philip was alone with himself, with memory, and with death. As he lay gasping, a voice seemed to ring through the silent room, repeating the same words again and again--and the voice was his own voice. It was himself--some other outside self of him--saying, in tireless repetition: "May I die a black, dishonourable death, abandoned and alone, if ever I deceive you. I should deserve that if I deceived you, Guida!..." "A black, dishonourable death, abandoned and alone": it was like some horrible dirge chanting in his ear.

Pictures flashed before his eyes, strange imaginings. Now he was passing through dark corridors, and the stone floor beneath was cold--so cold! He was going to some gruesome death, and monks with voices like his own voice were intoning: "Abandoned and alone. Alone--alone--abandoned and alone." . . . And now he was fighting, fighting on board the *Araminta*. There was the roar of the great guns, the screaming of the carronade slides, the rattle of musketry, the groans of the dying, the shouts of his victorious sailors, the crash of the main-mast as it fell upon the bulwarks. Then the swift sissing ripple of water, the thud of the *Araminta* as she struck, and the cold chill of the seas as she went down. How cold was the sea--ah, how it chilled every nerve and tissue of his body!

He roused to consciousness again. Here was still the blank cheerless room, the empty house, the lamplight flaring through the window upon his stricken face, upon the dark walls, upon the white paper lying on the

table beside him.

Paper--that was it--he must write, he must write while he had strength. With the last courageous effort of life, his strenuous will forcing the declining powers into obedience for a final combat, he drew the paper near, and began to write. The light flickered, wavered, he could just see the letters that he formed--no more.

Guida [he began], on the Ecrehos I said to you: "If I deceive you may I die a black, dishonourable death, abandoned and alone!" It has all come true. You were right, always right, and I was always wrong. I never started fair with myself or with the world. I was always in too great a hurry; I was too ambitious, Guida. Ambition has killed me, and it has killed her--the Comtesse. She is gone. What was it he said--if I could but remember what Grandjon-Larisse said--ah yes, yes!--after he had given me my death-wound, he said: "It is not the broken heart that kills, but broken pride." There is the truth. She is in her grave, and I am going out into the dark.

He lay back exhausted for a moment, in desperate estate. The body was fighting hard that the spirit might confess itself before the vital spark died down for ever. Seizing a glass of cordial near, he drank of it. The broken figure in its mortal defeat roused itself again, leaned over the paper, and a shaking hand traced on the brief piteous record of a life.

I climbed too fast. Things dazzled me. I thought too much of myself--myself, myself was everything always; and myself has killed me. In wanton haste I came to be admiral and sovereign duke, and it has all come to nothing--nothing. I wronged you, I denied you, there was the cause of all. There is no one to watch with me now to the one moment of life that counts. In this hour the clock of time fills all the space between earth and heaven. It will strike soon--the awful clock. It will soon strike twelve: and then it will be twelve of the clock for me always--always.

I know you never wanted revenge on me, Guida, but still you have it here. My life is no more now than vrac upon a rock. I cling, I cling, but that is all, and the waves break over me. I am no longer an admiral, I am no more a duke--I am nothing. It is all done. Of no account with men I am going to my judgment with God. But you remain, and you are Princess Philip d'Avranche, and your son--your son--will be Prince Guilbert d'Avranche. But I can leave him naught, neither estates nor power. There is little honour in the title now. So it may be you will not use it. But you will have a new life: with my death happiness may begin again for you. That thought makes death easier. I was never worthy of you, never. I understand myself now, and I know that you have read me all these years, read me through and through. The letter you wrote me, never a day or night has passed but, one way or another, it has come home to me.

There was a footfall outside his window. A roysterer went by in the

light of the flaring lamp. He was singing a ribald song. A dog ran barking at his heels. The reveller turned, drew his sword, and ran the dog through, then staggered on with his song. Philip shuddered, and with a supreme effort bent to the table again, and wrote on.

You were right: you were my star, and I was so blind with selfishness and vanity I could not see. I am speaking the truth to you now, Guida. I believe I might have been a great man if I had thought less of myself and more of others, more of you. Greatness, I was mad for that, and my madness has brought me to this desolate end--alone. Go tell Maitresse Aimable that she too was a good prophet. Tell her that, as she foresaw, I called your name in death, and you did not come. One thing before all: teach your boy never to try to be great, but always to live well and to be just. Teach him too that the world means better by him than he thinks, and that he must never treat it as his foe; he must not try to force its benefits and rewards. He must not approach it like the highwayman. Tell him never to flatter. That is the worst fault in a gentleman, for flattery makes false friends and the flatterer himself false. Tell him that good address is for ease and courtesy of life, but it must not be used to one's secret advantage as I have used mine to mortal undoing. If ever Guilbert be in great temptation, tell him his father's story, and read him these words to you, written, as you see, with the cramped fingers of death.

He could scarcely hold the pen now, and his eyes were growing dim.

. . . I am come to the end of my strength. I thought I loved you, Guida, but I know now that it was not love--not real love. Yet it was all a twisted manhood had to give. There are some things of mine that you will keep for your son, if you forgive me dead whom you despised living. Detricand Duke of Bercy will deal honourably by you. All that is mine at the Castle of Bercy he will secure to you. Tell him I have written it so; though he will do it of himself, I know. He is a great man. As I have gone downwards he has come upwards. There has been a star in his sky too. I know it, I know it, Guida, and he--he is not blind. The light is going, I cannot see. I can only--

He struggled fiercely for breath, but suddenly collapsed upon the table, and his head fell forward upon the paper; one cheek lying in the wet ink of his last written words, the other, cold and stark, turned to the window. The light from the lamp without flickered on it in gruesome sportiveness. The eyes stared and stared from the little dark room out into the world. But they did not see.

The night wore on. At last came a knocking, knocking at the door--tap! tap! tap! But he did not hear. A moment of silence, and again came a knocking--knocking--knocking . . . !

CHAPTER XLV

The white and red flag of Jersey was flying half-mast from the Cohue Royale, and the bell of the parish church was tolling. It was Saturday, but little business was being done in the Vier Marchi. Chattering people were gathered at familiar points, and at the foot of La Pyramide a large group surrounded two sailor-men just come from Gaspe, bringing news of adventuring Jersiais--Elie Mattingley, Carterette and Ranulph Delagarde. This audience quickly grew, for word was being passed on from one little group to another. So keen was interest in the story told by the home-coming sailors, that the great event which had brought them to the Vier Marchi was, for the moment, almost neglected.

Presently, however, a cannon-shot, then another, and another, roused the people to remembrance. The funeral cortege of Admiral Prince Philip d'Avranche was about to leave the Cohue Royale, and every eye was turned to the marines and sailors lining the road from the court-house to the church.

The Isle of Jersey, ever stubbornly loyal to its own--even those whom the outside world contemned or cast aside--jealous of its dignity even with the dead, had come to bury Philip d'Avranche with all good ceremony. There had been abatements to his honour, but he had been a strong man and he had done strong things, and he was a Jerseyman born, a Norman of the Normans. The Royal Court had judged between him and Guida, doing tardy justice to her, but of him they had ever been proud; and where conscience condemned here, vanity commended there. In any event they reserved the right, independent of all non-Jersiais, to do what they chose with their dead.

For what Philip had been as an admiral they would do his body reverence now; for what he had done as a man, that belonged to another tribunal. It had been proposed by the Admiral of the station to bury him from his old ship, the Imperturbable, but the Royal Court made its claim, and so his body had lain in state in the Cohue Royale. The Admiral joined hands with the island authorities. In both cases it was a dogged loyalty. The sailors of England knew Philip d'Avranche as a fighter, even as the Royal Court knew him as a famous and dominant Jerseyman. A battle-ship is a world of its own, and Jersey is a world of its own. They neither knew nor cared for the comment of the world without; or, knowing, refused to consider it.

When the body of Philip was carried from the Cohue Royale signals were made to the Imperturbable in the tide-way. From all her ships in company forty guns were fired funeral-wise and the flags were struck halfmast.

Slowly the cortege uncoiled itself to one long unbroken line from the steps of the Cohue Royale to the porch of the church. The Jurats in their red robes, the officers, sailors, and marines, added colour to the pageant. The coffin was covered by the flag of Jersey with the arms of William the Conqueror in the canton. Of the crowd some were curious, some stoical; some wept, some essayed philosophy.

"Et ben," said one, "he was a brave admiral!"

"Bravery was his trade," answered another: "act like a sheep and you'll be eaten by the wolf."

"It was a bad business about her that was Guida Landresse," remarked a third.

"Every man knows himself, God knows all men," snuffled the fanatical barber who had once delivered a sermon from the Pompe des Brigands.

"He made things lively while he lived, ba su!" droned the jailer of the Vier Prison. "But he has folded sails now."

"Ma fe, yes, he sleeps like a porpoise now, and white as a wax he looked up there in the Cohue Royale," put in a centenier standing by.

A voice came shrilly over the head of the centenier. "As white as you'll look yellow one day, bat'd'lagoule! Yellow and green, oui-gia--yellow like a bad apple, and cowardly green as a leek." This was Manon Moignard the witch.

"Man doux d'la vie, where's the Master of Burials?" babbled the jailer.

"The apprentice does the obs'quies to-day."

"The Master's sick of a squinzy," grunted the centenier. "So hatchet-face and bundle-o'-nails there brings dust to dust, amen."

All turned now to the Undertaker's Apprentice, a grim, saturnine figure with his grey face, protuberant eyes, and obsequious solemnity, in which lurked a callous smile. The burial of the great, the execution of the wicked, were alike to him. In him Fate seemed to personify life's revenges, its futilities, its calculating ironies. The flag-draped coffin was just about to pass, and the fanatical barber harked back to Philip. "They say it was all empty honours with him afore he died abroad."

"A full belly's a full belly if it's only full of straw," snapped Manon Moignard.

"Who was it brought him home?" asked the jailer. "None that was born on Jersey, but two that lived here," remarked Maitre Damian, the schoolmaster from St. Aubins.

"That Chevalier of Champsavoys and the other Duc de Bercy," interposed the centenier.

Maitre Damian tapped his stick upon the ground, and said oracularly: "It is not for me to say, but which is the rightful Duke and which is not, there is the political question!"

"Pardi, that's it," answered the centenier. "Why did Detricand Duke turn Philip Duke out of duchy, see him killed, then fetch him home to Jersey

like a brother? Ah, man pethe benin, that's beyond me!

"Those great folks does things their own ways; oui-gia," remarked the jailer.

"Why did Detricand Duke go back to France?" asked Maitre Damian, cocking his head wisely; "why did he not stay for obsequies--he?"

"That's what I say," answered the jailer, "those great folks does things their own ways."

"Ma fistre, I believe you," ejaculated the centenier. "But for the Chevalier there, for a Frenchman, that is a man after God's own heart--and mine."

"Ah then, look at that," said Manon Moignard, with a sneer, "when one pleases you and God it is a ticket to heaven, diantre!"

But in truth what Detricand and the Chevalier had done was but of human pity. The day after the duel, Detricand had arrived in Paris to proceed thence to Bercy. There he heard of Philip's death and of Damour's desertion. Sending officers to Bercy to frustrate any possible designs of Damour, he, with the Chevalier, took Philip's body back to Jersey, delivering it to those who would do it honour.

Detricand did not see Guida. For all that might be said to her now the Chevalier should be his mouthpiece. In truth there could be no better mouthpiece for him. It was Detricand--Detricand--Detricand, like a child, in admiration and in affection. If Guida did not understand all now, there should come a time when she would understand. Detricand would wait. She should find that he was just, that her honour and the honour of her child were safe with him.

As for Guida, it was not grief she felt in the presence of this tragedy. No spark of love sprang up, even when remembrance was now brought to its last vital moment. But a fathomless pity stirred her heart, that Philip's life had been so futile and that all he had done was come to naught. His letter, blotched and blotted by his own dead cheek, she read quietly. Yet her heart ached bitterly--so bitterly that her face became pinched with pain; for here in this letter was despair, here was the final agony of a broken life, here were the last words of the father of her child to herself. She saw with a sudden pang that in writing of Guilbert he only said your child, not ours. What a measureless distance there was between them in the hour of his death, and how clearly the letter showed that he understood at last!

The evening before the burial she went with the Chevalier to the Cohue Royale. As she looked at Philip's dead face bitterness and aching compassion were quieted within her. The face was peaceful--strong. There was on it no record of fret or despair. Its impassive dignity seemed to say that all accounts had been settled, and in this finality there was quiet; as though he had paid the price, as though the long account against him in the markets of life was closed and cancelled,

and the debtor freed from obligation for ever. Poignant impulses in her stilled, pity lost its wounding acuteness. She shed no tears, but at last she stretched out her hand and let it rest upon his forehead for a moment.

"Poor Philip!" she said.

Then she turned and slowly left the room, followed by the Chevalier, and by the noiseless Dormy Jamais, who had crept in behind them. As Dormy Jamais closed the door, he looked back to where the coffin lay, and in the compassion of fools he repeated Guida's words:

"Poor Philip!" he said.

Now, during Philip's burial, Dormy Jamais sat upon the roof of the Cohue Royale, as he had done on the day of the Battle of Jersey, looking down on the funeral cortege and the crowd. He watched it all until the ruffle of drums at the grave told that the body was being lowered--four ruffles for an admiral.

As the people began to disperse and the church bell ceased tolling, Dormy turned to another bell at his elbow, and set it ringing to call the Royal Court together. Sharp, mirthless, and acrid it rang:

Chicane--chicane! Chicane--chicane! Chicane--chicane!

IN JERSEY-A YEAR LATER

CHAPTER XLVI

"What is that for?" asked the child, pointing. Detricand put the watch to the child's ear. "It's to keep time. Listen. Do you hear it-tic-tic, tic-tic?"

The child nodded his head gleefully, and his big eyes blinked with understanding. "Doesn't it ever stop?" he asked.

"This watch never stops," replied Detricand. "But there are plenty of watches that do."

"I like watches," said the child sententiously.

"Would you like this one?" asked Detricand.

The child drew in a gurgling breath of pleasure. "I like it. Why doesn't mother have a watch?"

The man did not answer the last question. "You like it?" he said again, and he nodded his head towards the little fellow. "H'm, it keeps good time, excellent time it keeps," and he rose to meet the child's mother,

who having just entered the room, stood looking at them. It was Guida. She had heard the last words, and she glanced towards the watch curiously. Detricand smiled in greeting, and said to her: "Do you remember it?" He held up the watch.

She came forward eagerly. "Is it--is it that indeed, the watch that the dear grandpethe--?"

He nodded and smiled. "Yes, it has never once stopped since the moment he gave it me in the Vier-Marchi seven years ago. It has had a charmed existence amid many rough doings and accidents. I was always afraid of losing it, always afraid of an accident to it. It has seemed to me that if I could keep it things would go right with me, and things come out right in the end. Superstition, of course, but I lived a long time in Jersey. I feel more a Jerseyman than a Frenchman sometimes."

Although his look seemed to rest but casually on her face, it was evident he was anxious to feel the effect of every word upon her, and he added: "When the Sieur de Mauprat gave me the watch he said, 'May no time be ill spent that it records for you.'"

"Perhaps he knows his wish was fulfilled," answered Guida.

"You think, then, that I've kept my promise?"

"I am sure he would say so," she replied warmly.

"It isn't the promise I made to him that I mean, but the promise I made to you."

She smiled brightly. "You know what I think of that. I told you long ago." She turned her head away, for a bright colour had come to her cheek. "You have done great things, Prince," she added in a low tone.

He flashed a look of inquiry at her. To his ear there was in her voice a little touch--not of bitterness, but of something, as it were, muffled or reserved. Was she thinking how he had robbed her child of the chance of heritage at Bercy? He did not reply, but, stooping, put the watch again to the child's ear. "There you are, monseigneur!"

"Why do you call him monseigneur?" she asked. "Guilbert has no title to your compliment."

A look half-amused, half-perplexed, crossed over Detricand's face. "Do you think so?" he said musingly. Stooping once more, he said to the child: "Would you like the watch?" and added quickly, "you shall have it when you're grown up."

"Do you really mean it?" asked Guida, delighted; "do you really mean to give him the grandpethe's watch one day?"

"Oh yes, at least that--one day. But I have something more," he added quickly--"something more for you;" and he drew from his pocket a

miniature set in rubies and diamonds. "I have brought you this from the Duc de Mauban--and this," he went on, taking a letter from his pocket, and handing it with the gift. "The Duke thought you might care to have it. It is the face of your godmother, the Duchess Guidabaldine."

Guida looked at the miniature earnestly, and then said a little wistfully: "How beautiful a face--but the jewels are much too fine for me! What should one do here with rubies and diamonds? How can I thank the Duke!"

"Not so. He will thank you for accepting it. He begged me to say--as you will find by his letter to you--that if you will but go to him upon a visit with this great man here"--pointing to the child with a smile-- "he will count it one of the greatest pleasures of his life. He is too old to come to you, but he begs you to go to him--the Chevalier, and you, and Guilbert here. He is much alone now, and he longs for a little of that friendship which can be given by but few in this world. He counts upon your coming, for I said I thought you would."

"It would seem so strange," she answered, "to go from this cottage of my childhood, to which I have come back in peace at last--from this kitchen, to the chateau of the Duc de Mauban."

"But it was sure to come," he answered. "This kitchen to which I come also to redeem my pledge after seven years, it belongs to one part of your life. But there is another part to fulfil,"--he stooped and passed his hands over the curls of the child," and for your child here you should do it."

"I do not find your meaning," she said after a moment's deliberation. "I do not know what you would have me understand."

"In some ways you and I would be happier in simple surroundings," he replied gravely, "but it would seem that to play duly our part in the world, we must needs move in wider circles. To my mind this kitchen is the most delightful spot in the world. Here I took a fresh commission of life. I went out, a sort of battered remnant, to a forlorn hope; and now I come back to headquarters once again--not to be praised," he added in an ironical tone, and with a quick gesture of almost boyish shyness-- "not to be praised; only to show that from a grain of decency left in a man may grow up some sheaves of honest work and plain duty."

"No, it is much more than that, it is much, much more than that," she broke in.

"No, I am afraid it is not," he answered; "but that is not what I wished to say. I wished to say that for monseigneur here--"

A little flash of anger came into her eyes. He is no monseigneur, he is Guilbert d'Avranche," she said bitterly. "It is not like you to mock my child, Prince. Oh, I know you mean it playfully," she hurriedly added, "but--but it does not sound right to me."

"For the sake of monseigneur the heir to the duchy of Bercy," he added, laying his hand upon the child's head, "these things your devout friends suggest, you should do, Princess."

Her clear unwavering eye looked steadfastly at him, but her face turned pale.

"Why do you call him monseigneur the heir to the duchy of Bercy?" she said almost coldly, and with a little fear in her look too.

"Because I have come here to tell you the truth, and to place in your hands the record of an act of justice."

Drawing from his pocket a parchment gorgeous with seals, he stooped, and taking the hands of the child, he placed it in them. "Hold it tight, hold it tight, my little friend, for it is your very own," he said to the child with cheerful kindness. Then stepping back a little, and looking earnestly at Guida, he added with a motion of the hand towards the child:

"You must learn the truth from him."

"Oh, what can you mean--what can you mean?" she exclaimed. Dropping upon her knees, and running an arm round the child, she opened the parchment and read.

"What--what right has he to this?" she cried in a voice of dismay.

"A year ago you dispossessed his father from the duchy. Ah, I do not understand it! You--only you are the Duc de Bercy."

Her eyes were shining with a happy excitement and tenderness. No such look had been in them for many a day. Something that had long slept was waking in her, something long voiceless was speaking. This man brought back to her heart a glow she had never thought to feel again, the glow of the wonder of life and of a girlish faith.

"I am only Detricand of Vaufontaine," he answered. "What, did you--could you think that I would dispossess your child? His father was the adopted son of the Duc de Bercy. Nothing could wipe that out, neither law nor nations. You are always Princess Guida, and your child is always Prince Guilbert d'Avranche--and more than that."

His voice became lower, his war-beaten face lighted with that fire and force which had made him during years past a figure in the war records of Europe.

"I unseated Philip d'Avranche," he continued, "because he acquired the duchy through--a misapprehension; because the claims of the House of Vaufontaine were greater. We belonged; he was an alien. He had a right to his adoption, he had no right to his duchy--no real right in the equity of nations. But all the time I never forgot that the wife of Philip d'Avranche and her child had rights infinitely beyond his own. All that he achieved was theirs by every principle of justice. My plain duty was to win for your child that succession belonging to him by all

moral right. When Philip d'Avranche was killed, I set to work to do for your child what had been done by another for Philip d'Avranche. I have made him my heir. When he is of age I shall abdicate from the duchy in his favour. This deed, countersigned by the Powers that dispossessed his father, secures to him the duchy when he is old enough to govern."

Guida had listened like one in a dream. A hundred feelings possessed her, and one more than all. She suddenly saw all Detricand's goodness to her stretch out in a long line of devoted friendship, from this day to that far-off hour seven years before, when he had made a vow to her--kept how nobly! Devoted friendship--was it devoted friendship alone, even with herself? In a tumult of emotions she answered him hurriedly. "No, no, no, no! I cannot accept it. This is not justice, this is a gift for which there is no example in the world's history."

"I thought it best," he went on quietly, "to govern Bercy myself during these troubled years. So far its neutrality has been honoured, but who can tell what may come! As a Vaufontaine it is my duty to see that Bercy's interests are duly protected amidst the troubles of Europe."

Guida got to her feet now and stood looking dazedly at the parchment in her hand. The child, feeling himself neglected, ran out into the garden.

There was moisture in Guida's eyes as she presently said: "I had not thought that any man could be so noble--no, not even you."

"You should not doubt yourself so," he answered meaningly. "I am the work of your hands. If I have fought my way back to reputable life again--"

He paused, and took from his pocket a handkerchief. "This was the gage," he said, holding it up. "Do you remember the day I came to return it to you, and carried it off again?"

"It was foolish of you to keep it," she answered softly, "as foolish of you as to think that I shall accept for my child these great honours."

"But suppose the child in after years should blame you?" he answered slowly and with emphasis. "Suppose that Guilbert should say, What right had you, my mother, to refuse what was my due?"

This was the question she had asked herself long, long ago. It smote her heart now. What right had she to reject this gift of Fate to her child?

Scarcely above a whisper she replied: "Of course he might say that, but how, oh, how should we simple folk, he and I, be fitted for these high places--yet? Now that what I desired all these years for him has come, I have not the courage."

"You have friends to help you in all you do," he answered meaningly.

"But friends cannot always be with one," she answered.

"That depends upon the friends. There is one friend of yours who has known you for eighteen years. Eighteen years' growth should make a strong friendship--there was always friendship on his part at least. He can be a still stronger and better friend. He comes now to offer you the remainder of a life for which your own goodness is the guarantee. He comes to offer you a love of which your own soul must be the only judge, for you have eyes that see and a spirit that knows. The Chevalier needs you, and the Duc de Mauban needs you, but Detricand of Vaufontaine needs you a thousand times more."

"Oh, hush--but no, you must not!" she broke in, her face all crimson, her lips trembling.

"But yes, I must," he answered quickly. "You find peace here, but it is the peace of inaction. It dulls the brain, and life winds in upon itself wearily at the last. But out there is light and fire and action and the quick-beating pulse, and the joy of power wisely used, even to the end. You come of a great people, you were born to great things; your child has rights accorded now by every Court of Europe. You must act for him. For your child's sake, for my sake come out into the great field of life with me--as my wife, Guida."

She turned to him frankly, she looked at him steadfastly, the colour in her face came and went, but her eyes glowed with feeling.

"After all that has happened?" she asked in a low tone.

"It could only be because of all that has happened," he answered.

"No, no, you do not understand," she said quickly, a great pain in her voice. "I have suffered so, these many, many years! I shall never be light-hearted again. And I am not fitted for such high estate. Do you not see what you ask of me--to go from this cottage to a palace?"

"I love you too well to ask you to do what you could not. You must trust me," he answered, "you must give your life its chance, you must--"

"But listen to me," she interjected with breaking tones; "I know as surely as I know--as I know the face of my child, that the youth in me is dead. My summer came--and went--long ago. No, no, you do not understand--I would not make you unhappy. I must live only to make my child happy. That love has not been marred."

"And I must be judge of what is for my own happiness. And for yours--if I thought my love would make you unhappy for even one day, I should not offer it. I am your lover, but I am also your friend. Had it not been for you I might have slept in a drunkard's grave in Jersey. Were it not for you, my bones would now be lying in the Vendee. I left my peasants, I denied myself death with them to serve you. The old cause is gone. You and your child are now my only cause--"

"You make it so hard for me," she broke in. "Think of the shadows from the past always in my eyes, always in my heart--you cannot wear the

convict's chain without the lagging footstep afterwards."

"Shadows--friend of my soul, how should I dare come to you if there had never been shadows in your life! It is because you--you have suffered, because you know, that I come. Out of your miseries, the convict's lagging step, you say? Think what I was. There was never any wrong in you, but I was sunk in evil depths of folly--"

"I will not have you say so," she interrupted; "you never in your life did a dishonourable thing."

"Then again I say, trust me. For, on the honour of a Vaufontaine, I believe that happiness will be yours as my wife. The boy, you see how he and I--"

"Ah, you are so good to him!"

"You must give me chance and right to serve him. What else have you or I to look forward to? The honours of this world concern us little. The brightest joys are not for us. We have work before us, no rainbow ambitions. But the boy--think for him---" he paused.

After a little, she held out her hand towards him. "Good-bye," she said softly.

"Good-bye--you say good-bye to me!" he exclaimed in dismay.

"Till--till to-morrow," she answered, and she smiled. The smile had a little touch of the old archness which was hers as a child, yet, too, a little of the sadness belonging to the woman. But her hand-clasp was firm and strong; and her touch thrilled him. Power was there, power with infinite gentleness. And he understood her; which was more than all.

He turned at the door. She was standing very still, the parchment with the great seals yet in her hand. Without speaking, she held it out to him, as though uncertain what to do with it.

As he passed through the doorway he smiled, and said:

"To-morrow--to-morrow!"

EPILOGUE

St. John's Eve had passed. In the fields at Bonne-Nuit Bay the "Brow-brow! ben-ben!" of the Song of the Cauldron had affrighted the night; riotous horns, shaming the blare of a Witches' Sabbath, had been blown by those who, as old Jean Touzel said, carried little lead under their noses. The meadows had been full of the childlike islanders welcoming in the longest day of the year. Mid-summer Day had also come and gone, but with less noise and clamour, for St. John's Fair had been carried on with

an orderly gaiety--as the same Jean Touzel said, like a sheet of music. Even the French singers and dancers from St. Malo had been approved in Norman phrases by the Bailly and the Jurats, for now there was no longer war between England and France, Napoleon was at St. Helena, and the Bourbons were come again to their own.

It had been a great day, and the roads were cloudy with the dust of Mid-summer revellers going to their homes. But though some went many stayed, camping among the booths, since the Fair was for tomorrow and for other to-morrows after. And now, the day's sport being over, the superstitious were making the circle of the rock called William's Horse in Boulay Bay, singing the song of William, who, with the fabled sprig of sacred mistletoe, turned into a rock the kelpie horse carrying him to death.

There was one boat, however, which putting out into the Bay did not bear towards William's Horse, but, catching the easterly breeze, bore away westward towards the point of Plemont. Upon the stern of the boat was painted in bright colours, *Hardi Biaou*. "We'll be there soon after sunset," said the grizzled helmsman, Jean Touzel, as he glanced from the full sail to the setting sun.

Neither of his fellow-voyagers made reply, and for a time there was silence, save for the swish of the gunwale through the water. But at last Jean said:

"*Su' m'n ame*, but it is good this, after that!" and he jerked his head back towards the Fair-ground on the hill. "Even you will sleep to-night, Dormy Jamais, and you, my wife of all."

Maitresse Aimable shook her great head slowly on the vast shoulders, and shut her heavy eyelids. "Dame, but I think you are sleeping now--you," Jean went on.

Maitresse Aimable's eyes opened wide, and again she shook her head.

Jean looked a laugh at her through his great brass-rimmed spectacles and added:

"*Ba su*, then I know. It is because we go to sleep in my hut at Plemont where She live so long. I know, you never sleep there."

Maitresse Aimable shook her head once more, and drew from her pocket a letter.

At sight of it Dormy Jamais crawled quickly over to where the *Femme de Ballast* sat, and, 'reaching out, he touched it with both hands.

"Princess of all the world--*bidemme*," he said, and he threw out his arms and laughed.

Two great tears were rolling down Maitresse Aimable's cheeks.

"How to remember she, *ma fuifre!*" said Jean Touzel. "But go on to the

news of her."

Maitresse Aimable spread the letter out and looked at it lovingly. Her voice rose slowly up like a bubble from the bottom of a well, and she spoke.

"Ah man pethe benin, when it come, you are not here, my Jean. I take it to the Greffier to read for me. It is great news, but the way he read so sour I do not like, ba su! I see Maitre Damian the schoolmaster pass my door. I beckon, and he come. I take my letter here, I hold it close to his eyes. 'Read on that for me, Maitre Damian--you,' I say. O my good, when he read it, it sing sweet like a song, pergui! Once, two, three times I make him read it out--he has the voice so soft and round, Maitre Damian there."

"Glad and good!" interrupted Jean. "What is the news, my wife? What is the news of highness--he?"

Maitresse Aimable smiled, then she tried to speak, but her voice broke.

"The son--the son--at last he is the Duke of Bercy. E'fin, it is all here. The new King of France, he is there at the palace when the child which it have sleep on my breast, which its mother I have love all the years, kiss her son as the Duke of Bercy."

"Ch'est ben," said Jean, "you can trust the good God in the end."

Dormy Jamais did not speak. His eyes were fastened upon the north, where lay the Paternoster Rocks. The sun had gone down, the dusk was creeping on, and against the dark of the north there was a shimmer of fire--a fire that leapt and quivered about the Paternoster Rocks.

Dormy pointed with his finger. Ghostly lights or miracle of Nature, these fitful flames had come and gone at times these many years, and now again the wonder of the unearthly radiance held their eyes.

"Gatd'en'ale, I don't understand you--you!" said Jean, speaking to the fantastic fires as though they were human.

"There's plenty things we see we can't understand, and there's plenty we understand we can't never see. Ah bah, so it goes!" said Maitresse Aimable, and she put Guida's letter in her bosom.

.....

Upon the hill of Plemont above them, a stone taken from the chimney of the hut where Guida used to live, stood upright beside a little grave. Upon it was carved:

BIRIBI,
Fidele ami
De quels jours!

In the words of Maitresse Aimable, "Ah bah, so it goes."

FINIS

NOTE:

IT is possible that students of English naval history may find in the life of Philip d'Avranche, as set forth in this book, certain resemblances to the singular and long forgotten career of the young Jerseyman, Philip d'Auvergne of the "Arethusa," who in good time became Vice-Admiral of the White and His Serene Highness the Duke of Bouillon.

Because all the relatives and direct descendants of Admiral Prince Philip d'Auvergne are dead, I am the more anxious to state that, apart from one main incident, the story here-before written is not taken from the life of that remarkable man. Yet I will say also that I have drawn upon the eloquence, courage, and ability of Philip d'Auvergne to make the better part of Philip d'Avranche, whose great natural fault, an overleaping ambition, was the same fault that brought the famous Prince Admiral to a piteous death in the end.

In any case, this tale has no claim to be called a historical novel.

JERSEY WORDS AND PHRASES

WITH THEIR EQUIVALENTS IN ENGLISH OR FRENCH

A bi'tot = a bientot.

Achocre = dolt, ass.

Ah bah! (Difficult to render in English, but meaning much the same as "Well! well!")

Ah be! = eh bien.

Alles kedainne = to go quickly, to skedaddle.

Bachouar = a fool.

Ba su! = bien sur.

Bashin = large copper-lined stew-pan.

Batd'lagoule = chatterbox.

Bedgone = shortgown or deep bodice of print.

Beganne = daft fellow.

Biaou = beau.

Bidemme! = exclamation of astonishment.

Bouchi = mouthful.

Bilzard = idiot.

Chelin = shilling.

Ch'est ben = c'est bien.

Cotil = slope of a dale.

Coum est qu'on etes? }

Coum est qu'ou vos portest? } Comment vous portez-vous!

Couzain or couzaine = cousin.
 Crasset = metal oil-lamp of classic shape.
 Critchett = cricket.
 Diantre = diable.
 Dreschiaux = dresser.
 E'fant = enfant.
 E'fin = enfin.
 Eh ben = eh bien.
 Esmanus = scarecrow.
 Es-tu gentiment? = are you well?
 Et ben = and now.
 Gache-a-penn! = misery me!
 Gaderabotin! = deuce take it!
 Garche = lass.
 Gatd'en'ale! = God be with us!
 Grandpethe = grandpere.
 Han = kind of grass for the making of ropes, baskets, etc.
 Hanap = drinking-cup.
 Hardi = very.
 Hus = lower half of a door. (Doors of many old Jersey houses were divided horizontally, for protection against cattle, to let out the smoke, etc.)
 Je me crais; je to crais; je crais ben! = I believe it; true for you; I well believe it!
 Ma fe! }
 Ma fistre! }= ma foi!
 Ma fuifre! }
 Mai grand doux! = but goodness gracious!
 Man doux! = my good, oh dear! (Originally man Dieu!)
 Man doux d'la vie! = upon my life!
 Man gui, mon pethe! = mon Dieu, mon pere!
 Man pethe benin! = my good father!
 Marchi = marche.
 Mogue = drinking-cup.
 Nannin; nannin-gia! = no; no indeed!
 Ni bouf ni baf } Expression of absolute negation, untranslatable.
 Ni fiche ni bran }
 Oui-gia! = yes indeed!
 Par made = par mon Dieu.
 Pardi! }
 Pardingue! }= old forms of par Dieul
 Pergui! }
 Pend'loque = ragamuffin.
 Queminzolle = overcoat.
 Raclyi = hanging rack from the rafters of a kitchen.
 Respe d'la compagnie! = with all respect for present company.
 Shale ben = very well.
 Simnel = a sort of biscuit, cup-shaped, supposed to represent unleavened bread, specially eaten at Easter.
 Soupe a la graisse = very thin soup, chiefly made of water, with a few vegetables and some dripping.
 Su' m'n ame = sur mon ame!
 Tcheche? = what's that you say?

Trejours = toujours.

Tres-ba = tres bien.

Veille = a wide low settle. (Probably from lit de fouaille.) Also applied to evening gatherings, when, sitting cross-legged on the veille, the neighbours sang, talked, and told stories.

Verges = the land measure of Jersey, equal to forty perches. Two and a quarter vergees are equivalent to the English acre.

Vier = vieux.

Vraic = a kind of sea-weed.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

It is not the broken heart that kills, but broken pride

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