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#67 in our series by Gilbert Parker

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Title: The Lane That Had No Turning, Volume 4.

Author: Gilbert Parker

Release Date: August, 2004 [EBook #6240]
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]
[This file was first posted on October 17, 2002]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LANE HAD NO TURNING, PARKER, V4 ***

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THE LANE THAT HAD NO TURNING

By Gilbert Parker

Volume 4.

TIMES WERE HARD IN PONTIAC
MEDALLION'S WHIM
THE PRISONER
AN UPSET PRICE
A FRAGMENT OF LIVES
THE MAN THAT DIED AT ALMA
THE BARON OF BEAUGARD
THE TUNE McGILVERAY PLAYED

TIMES WERE HARD IN PONTIAC

It was soon after the Rebellion, and there was little food to be had and less money, and winter was at hand. Pontiac, ever most loyal to old France, though obedient to the English, had herself sent few recruits to be shot down by Colborne; but she had emptied her pockets in sending to the front the fulness of her barns and the best cattle of her fields. She gave her all; she was frank in giving, hid nothing; and when her own trouble came there was no voice calling on her behalf. And Pontiac would rather starve than beg. So, as the winter went on, she starved in silence, and no one had more than sour milk and bread and a potato now and then. The Cure, the Avocat, and the Little Chemist fared no better than the habitants; for they gave all they had right and left, and themselves often went hungry to bed. And the truth is that few outside Pontiac knew of her suffering; she kept the secret of it close.

It seemed at last, however, to the Cure that he must, after all, write to the world outside for help. That was when he saw the faces of the children get pale and drawn. There never was a time when there were so few fish in the river and so little game in the woods. At last, from the altar steps one Sunday, the Cure, with a calm, sad voice, told the people that, for "the dear children's sake," they must sink their pride and ask help from without. He would write first to the Bishop of Quebec; "for," said he, "Mother Church will help us; she will give us food, and money to buy seed in the spring; and, please God, we will pay all back in a year or two!" He paused a minute, then continued: "Some one must go, to speak plainly and wisely of our trouble, that there be no mistake--we are not beggars, we are only borrowers. Who will go? I may not myself, for who would give the Blessed Sacrament, and speak to the sick, or say Mass and comfort you?"

There was silence in the church for a moment, and many faces meanwhile turned instinctively to M. Garon the Avocat, and some to the Little

Chemist.

"Who will go?" asked the Cure again. "It is a bitter journey, but our pride must not be our shame in the end. Who will go?"

Every one expected that the Avocat or the Little Chemist would rise; but while they looked at each other, waiting and sorrowful, and the Avocat's fingers fluttered to the seat in front of him, to draw himself up, a voice came from the corner opposite, saying: "M'sieu' le Cure, I will go."

A strange, painful silence fell on the people for a moment, and then went round an almost incredulous whisper: "Parpon the dwarf!"

Parpon's deep eyes were fixed on the Cure, his hunched body leaning on the railing in front of him, his long, strong arms stretched out as if he were begging for some good thing. The murmur among the people increased, but the Cure raised his hand to command silence, and his eyes gazed steadily at the dwarf. It might seem that he was noting the huge head, the shaggy hair, the overhanging brows, the weird face of this distortion of a thing made in God's own image. But he was thinking instead of how the angel and the devil may live side by side in a man, and neither be entirely driven out--and the angel conquer in great times and seasons.

He beckoned to Parpon to come over, and the dwarf trotted with a sidelong motion to the chancel steps. Every face in the congregation was eager, and some were mystified, even anxious. They all knew the singular power of the little man--his knowledge, his deep wit, his judgment, his occasional fierceness, his infrequent malice; but he was kind to children and the sick, and the Cure and the Avocat and their little coterie respected him. Once everybody had worshipped him: that was when he had sung in the Mass, the day of the funeral of the wife of Farette the miller, for whom he worked. It had been rumoured that in his hut by the Rock of Red Pigeons, up at Dalgrothe Mountain, a voice of most wonderful power and sweetness had been heard singing; but this was only rumour. Yet when the body of the miller's wife lay in the church, he had sung so that men and women wept and held each other's hands for joy. He had never sung since, however; his voice of silver was locked away in the cabinet of secret purposes which every man has somewhere in his own soul.

"What will you say to the Bishop, Parpon?" asked the Cure.

The congregation stirred in their seats, for they saw that the Cure intended Parpon to go.

Parpon went up two steps of the chancel quietly and caught the arm of the Cure, drawing him down to whisper in his ear.

A flush and then a peculiar soft light passed over the Cure's face, and he raised his hand over Parpon's head in benediction and said: "Go, my son, and the blessing of God and of His dear Son be with you."

Then suddenly he turned to the altar, and, raising his hands, he tried to

Speak, but only said: "O Lord, Thou knowest our pride and our vanity, hear us, and--"

Soon afterwards, with tearful eyes, he preached from the text:

"And the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

.....

Five days later a little, uncouth man took off his hat in the chief street of Quebec, and began to sing a song of Picardy to an air which no man in French Canada had ever heard. Little farmers on their way to the market by the Place de Cathedral stopped, listening, though every moment's delay lessened their chances of getting a stand in the market-place. Butchers and milkmen loitered, regardless of waiting customers; a little company of soldiers caught up the chorus, and, to avoid involuntary revolt, their sergeant halted them, that they might listen. Gentlemen strolling by--doctor, lawyer, officer, idler--paused and forgot the raw climate, for this marvellous voice in the unshapely body warmed them, and they pushed in among the fast-gathering crowd. Ladies hurrying by in their sleighs lost their hearts to the thrilling notes of:

"Little grey fisherman,
Where is your daughter?
Where is your daughter so sweet?
Little grey man who comes Over the water,
I have knelt down at her feet,
Knelt at your Gabrielle's feet---ci ci!"

Presently the wife of the governor stepped out from her sleigh, and, coming over, quickly took Parpon's cap from his hand and went round among the crowd with it, gathering money.

"He is hungry, he is poor," she said, with tears in her eyes. She had known the song in her childhood, and he who used to sing it to her was in her sight no more. In vain the gentlemen would have taken the cap from her; she gathered the money herself, and others followed, and Parpon sang on.

A night later a crowd gathered in the great hall of the city, filling it to the doors, to hear the dwarf sing. He came on the platform dressed as he had entered the city, with heavy, home-made coat and trousers, and moccasins, and a red woollen comforter about his neck--but this comforter he took off when he began to sing. Old France and New France, and the loves and hates and joys and sorrows of all lands, met that night in the soul of this dwarf with the divine voice, who did not give them his name, so that they called him, for want of a better title, the Provençal. And again two nights afterwards it was the same, and yet again a third night and a fourth, and the simple folk, and wise folk also, went mad after Parpon the dwarf.

Then, suddenly, he disappeared from Quebec City, and the next Sunday

morning, while the Cure was saying the last words of the Mass, he entered the Church of St. Saviour's at Pontiac. Going up to the chancel steps he waited. The murmuring of the people drew the Cure's attention, and then, seeing Parpon, he came forward.

Parpon drew from his breast a bag, and put it in his hands, and beckoning down the Cure's head, he whispered.

The Cure turned to the altar and raised the bag towards it in ascription and thanksgiving, then he turned to Parpon again, but the dwarf was trotting away down the aisle and from the church.

"Dear children," said the Cure, "we are saved, and we are not shamed." He held up the bag. "Parpon has brought us two thousand dollars: we shall have food to eat, and there shall be more money against seed-time. The giver of this good gift demands that his name be not known. Such is all true charity. Let us pray."

So hard times passed from Pontiac as the months went on; but none save the Cure and the Avocat knew who had helped her in her hour of need.

MEDALLION'S WHIM

When the Avocat began to lose his health and spirits, and there crept through his shrewd gravity and kindliness a petulance and dejection, Medallion was the only person who had an inspiriting effect upon him. The Little Chemist had decided that the change in him was due to bad circulation and failing powers: which was only partially true.

Medallion made a deeper guess. "Want to know what's the matter with him?" he said. "Ha, I'll tell you! Woman."

"Woman--God bless me!" said the Little Chemist, in a frightened way.

"Woman, little man; I mean the want of a woman," said Medallion.

The Cure, who was present, shrugged his shoulders. "He has an excellent cook, and his bed and jackets are well aired; I see them constantly at the windows."

A laugh gurgled in Medallion's throat. He loved these innocent folk; but himself went twice a year to Quebec City and had more expanded views.

"Woman, Padre"--nodding to the priest, and rubbing his chin so that it rasped like sand-paper--"Woman, my druggist"--throwing a sly look at the Chemist---"woman, neither as cook nor bottle-washer, is what he needs. Every man-out of holy orders"--this in deference to his good friend the Cure--"arrives at the time when his youth must be renewed or he becomes

as dry bones--like an empty house--furniture sold off. Can only be renewed one way--Woman. Well, here's our Avocat, and there's his remedy. He's got the cooking and the clean fresh linen; he must have a wife, the very best."

"Ah, my friend, you are droll," said the Cure, arching his long fingers at his lips and blowing gently through them, but not smiling in the least; rather serious, almost reproving.

"It is such a whim, such a whim!" said the Little Chemist, shaking his head and looking through his glasses sideways like a wise bird.

"Ha--you shall see! The man must be saved; our Cure shall have his fees; our druggist shall provide the finest essences for the feast--no more pills. And we shall dine with our Avocat once a week--with asparagus in season for the Cure, and a little good wine for all. Ha!"

His Ha! was never a laugh; it was unctuous, abrupt, an ejaculation of satisfaction, knowledge, solid enjoyment, final solution.

The Cure shook his head doubtfully; he did not see the need; he did not believe in Medallion's whim; still he knew that the man's judgment was shrewd in most things, and he would be silent and wait. But he shrank from any new phase of life likely to alter the conditions of that old companionship, which included themselves, the Avocat, and the young Doctor, who, like the Little Chemist, was married.

The Chemist sharply said: "Well, well, perhaps. I hope. There is a poetry (his English was not perfect, and at times he mixed it with French in an amusing manner), a little chanson, which runs:

"Sorrowful is the little house,
The little house by the winding stream;
All the laughter has died away
 Out of the little house.
But down there come from the lofty hills
Footsteps and eyes agleam,
Bringing the laughter of yesterday
 Into the little house,
By the winding stream and the hills.
Di ron, di ron, di ron, di ron-don!"

The Little Chemist blushed faintly at the silence that followed his timid, quaint recital. The Cure looked calm and kind, and drawn away as if in thought; but Medallion presently got up, stooped, and laid his long fingers on the shoulder of the apothecary.

"Exactly, little man," he said; "we've both got the same idea in our heads. I've put it hard fact, you've put it soft sentiment; and it's God's truth either way."

Presently the Cure asked, as if from a great distance, so meditative was his voice: "Who will be the woman, Medallion?"

"I've got one in my eye--the very right one for our Avocat; not here, not out of Pontiac, but from St. Jean in the hills--fulfilling your verses, gentle apothecary. She must bring what is fresh--he must feel that the hills have come to him, she that the valley is hers for the first time. A new world for them both. Ha!"

"Regardez Ca! you are a great man," said the Little Chemist.

There was a strange, inscrutable look in the kind priest's eyes. The Avocat had confessed to him in his time.

Medallion took up his hat.

"Where are you going?" said the Little Chemist. "To our Avocat, and then to St. Jean."

He opened the door and vanished. The two that were left shook their heads and wondered.

Chuckling softly to himself, Medallion strode away through the lane of white-board houses and the smoke of strong tabac from these houses, now and then pulling suddenly up to avoid stumbling over a child, where children are numbered by the dozen to every house. He came at last to a house unlike the others, in that it was of stone and larger. He leaned for a moment over the gate, and looked through a window into a room where the Avocat sat propped up with cushions in a great chair, staring gloomily at two candles burning on the table before him. Medallion watched him for a long time. The Avocat never changed his position; he only stared at the candle, and once or twice his lips moved. A woman came in and put a steaming bowl before him, and laid a pipe and matches beside the bowl. She was a very little, thin old woman, quick and quiet and watchful--his housekeeper. The Avocat took no notice of her. She looked at him several times anxiously, and passed backwards and forwards behind him as a hen moves upon the flank of her brood. All at once she stopped. Her small, white fingers, with their large rheumatic knuckles, lay flat on her lips as she stood for an instant musing; then she trotted lightly to a bureau, got pen and paper and ink, reached down a bunch of keys from the mantel, and came and put them all beside the bowl and the pipe. Still the Avocat did not stir, or show that he recognised her. She went to the door, turned, and looked back, her fingers again at her lips, then slowly sidled out of the room. It was long before the Avocat moved. His eyes had not wavered from the space between the candles. At last, however, he glanced down. His eye caught the bowl, then the pipe. He reached out a slow hand for the pipe, and was taking it up, when his glance fell on the keys and the writing material. He put the pipe down, looked up at the door through which the little old woman had gone, gazed round the room, took up the keys, but soon put them down again with a sigh, and settled back in his chair. Now his gaze alternated between that long lane, sloping into shadow between the candles, and the keys.

Medallion threw a leg over the fence and came in a few steps to the door. He opened it quietly and entered. In the dark he felt his way along the

wall to the door of the Avocat's room, opened it, and thrust in his ungainly, whimsical face.

"Ha!" he laughed with quick-winking eyes. "Evening, Garon. Live the Code Napoleon! Pipes for two." A change came slowly over the Avocat. His eyes drew away from that vista between the candles, and the strange distant look faded out of them.

"Great is the Code Napoleon!" he said mechanically. Then, presently:

"Ah, my friend, Medallion!"

His first words were the answer to a formula which always passed between them on meeting. As soon as Garon had said them, Medallion's lanky body followed his face, and in a moment he had the Avocat's hand in his, swallowing it, of purpose crushing it, so that Monsieur Garon waked up smartly and gave his visitor a pensive smile. Medallion's cheerful nervous vitality seldom failed to inspire whom he chose to inspire with something of his own life and cheerfulness. In a few moments both the Avocat and himself were smoking, and the contents of the steaming bowl were divided between them. Medallion talked on many things. The little old housekeeper came in, chirped a soft good-evening, flashed a small thankful smile at Medallion, and, after renewing the bowl and lighting two more tall candles, disappeared. Medallion began with the parish, passed to the law, from the law to Napoleon, from Napoleon to France, and from France to the world, drawing out from the Avocat something of his old vivacity and fire. At last Medallion, seeing that the time was ripe, turned his glass round musingly in his fingers before him and said:

"Benoit, Annette's husband, died to-day, Garon. You knew him.

He went singing--gone in the head, but singing as he used to do before he married--or got drunk! Perhaps his youth came back to him when he was going to die, just for a minute."

The Avocat's eye gazed at Medallion earnestly now, and Medallion went on:

"As good singing as you want to hear. You've heard the words of the song--the river drivers sing it:

"What is there like to the cry of the bird
That sings in its nest in the lilac tree?
A voice the sweetest you ever have heard;
It is there, it is here, ci ci!
It is there, it is here, it must roam and roam,
And wander from shore to shore,
Till I go forth and bring it home,
And enter and close my door
Row along, row along home, ci ci!"

When Medallion had finished saying the first verse he waited, but the Avocat said nothing; his eyes were now fastened again on that avenue between the candles leading out into the immortal part of him--his past; he was busy with a life that had once been spent in the fields of Fontainebleau and in the shadow of the Pantheon.

Medallion went on:

"What is there like to the laughing star,
Far up from the lilac tree?
A face that's brighter and finer far;
It laughs and it shines, ci, ci!
It laughs and it shines, it must roam and roam,
And travel from shore to shore,
Till I go forth and bring it home,
And house it within my door
Row along, row along home, ci, ci!"

When Medallion had finished he raised his glass and said: "Garon, I drink to home and woman!"

He waited. The Avocat's eyes drew away from the candles again, and he came to his feet suddenly, swaying slightly as he did so. He caught up a glass and, lifting it, said: "I drink to home and--" a little cold burst of laughter came from him, he threw his head back with something like disdain--"and the Code Napoleon!" he added abruptly.

Then he put the glass down without drinking, wheeled back, and dropped into his chair. Presently he got up, took his keys, went over, opened the bureau, and brought back a well-worn note-book which looked like a diary. He seemed to have forgotten Medallion's presence, but it was not so; he had reached the moment of disclosure which comes to every man, no matter how secretive, when he must tell what is on his mind or die. He opened the book with trembling fingers, took a pen and wrote, at first slowly, while Medallion smoked:

"September 13th.--It is five-and-twenty years ago to-day--Mon Dieu, how we danced that night on the flags before the Sorbonne! How gay we were in the Maison Bleu! We were gay and happy--Lulie and I--two rooms and a few francs ahead every week. That night we danced and poured out the light wine, because we were to be married to-morrow. Perhaps there would be a child, if the priest blessed us, she whispered to me as we watched the soft-travelling moon in the gardens of the Luxembourg. Well, we danced. There was an artist with us. I saw him catch Lulie about the waist, and kiss her on the neck. She was angry, but I did not think of that; I was mad with wine. I quarrelled with her, and said to her a shameful thing. Then I rushed away. We were not married the next day; I could not find her. One night, soon after, there was a revolution of students at Mont Parnasse. I was hurt. I remember that she came to me then and nursed me, but when I got well she was gone. Then came the secret word from the Government that I must leave the country or go to prison. I came here. Alas! it is long since we danced before the Sorbonne, and supped at the Maison Bleu. I shall never see again the gardens of the Luxembourg. Well, that was a mad night five-and-twenty years ago!"

His pen went faster and faster. His eyes lighted up, he seemed quite forgetful of Medallion's presence. When he finished, a fresh change came

over him. He gathered his thin fingers in a bunch at his lips, and made an airy salute to the warm space between the candles. He drew himself together with a youthful air, and held his grey head gallantly. Youth and age in him seemed almost grotesquely mingled. Sprightly notes from the song of a *cafe chantant* hovered on his thin, dry lips. Medallion, amused, yet with a hushed kind of feeling through all his nerves, pushed the Avocat's tumbler till it touched his fingers. The thin fingers twined round it, and once more he came to his feet. He raised the glass. "To--" for a minute he got no further--"To the wedding-eve!" he said, and sipped the hot wine. Presently he pushed the little well-worn book over to Medallion. "I have known you fifteen years--read!" he said. He gave Medallion a meaning look out of his now flashing eyes. Medallion's bony face responded cordially. "Of course," he answered, picked up the book, and read what the Avocat had written. It was on the last page. When he had finished reading, he held the book musingly. His whim had suddenly taken on a new colour. The Avocat, who had been walking up and down the room, with the quick step of a young man, stopped before him, took the book from him, turned to the first page, and handed it back silently. Medallion read:

Quebec, September 13th, 18-. It is one year since. I shall learn to laugh some day.

Medallion looked up at him. The old man threw back his head, spread out the last page in the book which he had just written, and said defiantly, as though expecting contradiction to his self-deception--"I have learned."

Then he laughed, but the laugh was dry and hollow and painful. It suddenly passed from his wrinkled lips, and he sat down again; but now with an air as of shy ness and shame. "Let us talk," he said, "of-- of the Code Napoleon."

The next morning Medallion visited St. Jean in the hills. Five years before he had sold to a new-comer at St. Jean--Madame Lecyr--the furniture of a little house, and there had sprung up between them a quiet friendship, not the less admiring on Medallion's part because Madame Lecyr was a good friend to the poor and sick. She never tired, when they met, of hearing him talk of the Cure, the Little Chemist, and the Avocat; and in the Avocat she seemed to take the most interest, making countless inquiries--countless when spread over many conversations--upon his life during the time Medallion had known him. He knew also that she came to Pontiac, occasionally, but only in the evening; and once of a moonlight night he had seen her standing before the window of the Avocat's house. Once also he had seen her veiled in the little crowded court-room of Pontiac when an interesting case was being tried, and noticed how she watched Monsieur Garon, standing so very still that she seemed lifeless; and how she stole out as soon as he had done speaking.

Medallion had acute instincts, and was supremely a man of self-counsel. What he thought he kept to him self until there seemed necessity to speak. A few days before the momentous one herebefore described he had called at Madame Lecyr's house, and, in course of conversation, told her

that the Avocat's health was breaking; that the day before he had got completely fogged in court over the simplest business, and was quite unlike his old, shrewd, kindly self. By this time he was almost prepared to see her turn pale and her fingers flutter at the knitting-needles she held. She made an excuse to leave the room for a moment. He saw a little book lying near the chair from which she had risen. Perhaps it had dropped from her pocket. He picked it up. It was a book of French songs--Beranger's and others less notable. On the fly-leaf was written: "From Victor to Lulie, September 13th, 18-." Presently she came back to him quite recovered and calm, inquired how the Avocat was cared for, and hoped he would have every comfort and care. Medallion grew on the instant bold. He was now certain that Victor was the Avocat, and Lulie was Madame Lecyr. He said abruptly to her: "Why not come and cheer him up--such old friends as you are?"

At that she rose with a little cry, and stared anxiously at him. He pointed to the book of songs. "Don't be angry--I looked," he said.

She breathed quick and hard, and said nothing, but her fingers laced and interlaced nervously in her lap. "If you were friends why don't you go to him?" he said.

She shook her head mournfully. "We were more than friends, and that is different."

"You were his wife?" said Medallion gently.

"It was different," she replied, flushing. "France is not the same as here. We were to be married, but on the eve of our wedding-day there was an end to it all. Only five years ago I found out he was here."

Then she became silent, and would, or could, speak no more; only, she said at last before he went: "You will not tell him, or any one?"

She need not have asked Medallion. He knew many secrets and kept them; which is not the usual way of good-humoured people.

But now, with the story told by the Avocat himself in his mind, he saw the end of the long romance. He came once more to the house of Madame Lecyr, and being admitted, said to her: "You must come at once with me."

She trembled towards him. "He is worse--he is dying!"

He smiled. "Not dying at all. He needs you; come along. I'll tell you as we go."

But she hung back. Then he told her all he had seen and heard the evening before. Without a word further she prepared to go. On the way he turned to her and said: "You are Madame Lecyr?"

"I am as he left me," she replied timidly, but with a kind of pride, too.

"Don't mistake me," he said. "I thought perhaps you had been married

since."

The Avocat sat in his little office, feebly fumbling among his papers, as Medallion entered on him and called to him cheerily: "We are coming to see you to-night, Garon--the Cure, our Little Chemist, and the Seigneur; coming to supper."

The Avocat put out his hand courteously; but he said in a shrinking, pained voice: "No, no, not to-night, Medallion. I would wish no visitors this night--of all."

Medallion stooped over him, and caught him by both arms gently. "We shall see," he said. "It is the anniversary," he whispered.

"Ah, pardon!" said the Avocat, with a reproving pride, and shrank back as if all his nerves had been laid bare. But Medallion turned, opened the door, went out, and let in a woman, who came forward and timidly raised her veil.

"Victor!" Medallion heard, then "Lulie!" and then he shut the door, and, with supper in his mind, went into the kitchen to see the housekeeper, who, in this new joy, had her own tragedy--humming to himself:

"But down there come from the lofty hills
Footsteps and eyes agleam,
Bringing the laughter of yesterday
Into the little house."

THE PRISONER

His chief occupation in the daytime was to stand on the bench by the small barred window and watch the pigeons on the roof and in the eaves of the house opposite. For five years he had done this. In the summer a great fire seemed to burn beneath the tin of the roof, for a quivering hot air rose from them, and the pigeons never alighted on them, save in the early morning or in the evening. Just over the peak could be seen the topmost branch of a maple, too slight to bear the weight of the pigeons, but the eaves were dark and cool, and there his eyes rested when he tired of the hard blue sky and the glare of the slates.

In winter the roof was covered for weeks and months by a blanket of snow which looked like a shawl of impacted wool, white and restful, and the windows of the house were spread with frost. But the pigeons were always gay, walking on the ledges or crowding on the shelves of the lead pipes. He studied them much, but he loved them more. His prison was less a prison because of them, and during those long five years he found himself more in touch with them than with the wardens of the prison or with any

of his fellow-prisoners. To the former he was respectful, and he gave them no trouble at all; with the latter he had nothing in common, for they were criminals, and he--so wild and mad with drink and anger was he at the time, that he had no remembrance, absolutely none, of how Jean Gamache lost his life.

He remembered that they had played cards far into the night; that they had quarrelled, then made their peace; that the others had left; that they had begun gaming and drinking and quarrelling again--and then everything was blurred, save for a vague recollection that he had won all Gamache's money and had pocketed it. Afterwards came a blank.

He waked to find two officers of the law beside him, and the body of Jean Gamache, stark and dreadful, a few feet away.

When the officers put their hands upon him he shook them off; when they did it again he would have fought them to the death, had it not been for his friend, tall Medallion the auctioneer, who laid a strong hand on his arm and said, "Steady, Turgeon, steady!" and he had yielded to the firm friendly pressure.

Medallion had left no stone unturned to clear him at the trial, had himself played detective unceasingly. But the hard facts remained, and on a chain of circumstantial evidence Blaze Turgeon was convicted of manslaughter and sent to prison for ten years. Blaze himself had said that he did not remember, but he could not believe that he had committed the crime. Robbery? He shrugged his shoulders at that, he insisted that his lawyer should not reply to the foolish and insulting suggestion. But the evidence went to show that Gamache had all the winnings when the other members of the party retired, and this very money had been found in Blaze's pocket. There was only Blaze's word that they had played cards again. Anger? Possibly. Blaze could not recall, though he knew they had quarrelled. The judge himself, charging the jury, said that he never before had seen a prisoner so frank, so outwardly honest, but he warned them that they must not lose sight of the crime itself, the taking of a human life, whereby a woman was made a widow and a child fatherless. The jury found him guilty.

With few remarks the judge delivered his sentence, and then himself, shaken and pale, left the court-room hurriedly, for Blaze Turgeon's father had been his friend from boyhood.

Blaze took his sentence calmly, looking the jury squarely in the eyes, and when the judge stopped, he bowed to him, and then turned to the jury and said:

"Gentlemen, you have ruined my life. You don't know, and I don't know, who killed the man. You have guessed, and I take the penalty. Suppose I'm innocent--how will you feel when the truth comes out? You've known me more or less these twenty years, and you've said, with evidently no more knowledge than I've got, that I did this horrible thing. I don't know but that one of you did it. But you are safe, and I take my ten years!"

He turned from them, and, as he did so, he saw a woman looking at him from a corner of the court-room, with a strange, wild expression. At the moment he saw no more than an excited, bewildered face, but afterwards this face came and went before him, flashing in and out of dark places in a kind of mockery.

As he went from the court-room another woman made her way to him in spite of the guards. It was the Little Chemist's wife, who, years before, had been his father's housekeeper, who knew him when his eyes first opened on the world.

"My poor Blaze! my poor Blaze!" she said, clasping his manacled hands.

In prison he refused to see all visitors, even Medallion, the Little Chemist's wife, and the good Father Fabre. Letters, too, he refused to accept and read. He had no contact, wished no contact with the outer world, but lived his hard, lonely life by himself, silent, studious--for now books were a pleasure to him. He had entered his prison a wild, excitable, dissipated youth, and he had become a mature brooding man. Five years had done the work of twenty.

The face of the woman who looked at him so strangely in the court-room haunted him so that at last it became a part of his real life, lived largely at the window where he looked out at the pigeons on the roof of the hospital.

"She was sorry for me," he said many a time to himself. He was shaken with misery often, so that he rocked to and fro as he sat on his bed, and a warder heard him cry out even in the last days of his imprisonment:

"O God, canst Thou do everything but speak!" And again: "That hour--the memory of that hour, in exchange for my ruined life!"

One day the gaoler came to him and said: "Monsieur Turgeon, you are free. The Governor has cut off five years from your sentence."

Then he was told that people were waiting without--Medallion, the Little Chemist and his wife, and others more important. But he would not go to meet them, and he stepped into the open world alone at dawn the next morning, and looked out upon a still sleeping village. Suddenly there stood before him a woman, who had watched by the prison gates all night; and she put out her hand in entreaty, and said with a breaking voice: "You are free at last!"

He remembered her--the woman who had looked at him so anxiously and sorrowfully in the court-room. "Why did you come to meet me?" he asked.

"I was sorry for you."

"But that is no reason."

"I once committed a crime," she whispered, with shrinking bitterness.

"That's bad," he said. "Were you punished?" He looked at her keenly, almost fiercely, for a curious suspicion shot into his mind.

She shook her head and answered no.

"That's worse!"

"I let some one else take my crime upon him and be punished for it," she said, an agony in her eyes. "Why was that?"

"I had a little child," was her reply.

"And the man who was punished instead?"

"He was alone in the world," she said.

A bitter smile crept to his lips, and his face was afire. He shut his eyes, and when they opened again discovery was in them.

"I remember you now," he said. "I remember now.

"I waked and saw you looking at me that night! Who was the father of your child?"

"Jean Gamache," she replied. "He ruined me and left me to starve."

"I am innocent of his death!" he said quietly and gladly.

She nodded. He was silent for a moment. "The child still lives?" he asked. She nodded again. "Well, let it be so," he said. "But you owe me five years--and a good name."

"I wish to God I could give them back!" she cried, tears streaming down her cheeks. "It was for my child; he was so young."

"It can't be helped now," he said sighing, and he turned away from her.

"Won't you forgive me?" she asked bitterly.

"Won't you give me back those five years?"

"If the child did not need me I would give my life," she answered. "I owe it to you."

Her haggard, hunted face made him sorry; he, too, had suffered.

"It's all right," he answered gently. "Take care of your child."

Again he moved away from her, and went down the little hill, with a cloud gone from his face that had rested there five years. Once he turned to look back. The woman was gone, but over the prison a flock of pigeons were flying. He took off his hat to them.

Then he went through the town, looking neither to right nor left, and came to his own house, where the summer morning was already entering the open windows, though he had thought to find the place closed and dark.

The Little Chemist's wife met him in the doorway. She could not speak, nor could he, but he kissed her as he had done when he went condemned to prison. Then he passed on to his own room, and entering, sat down before the open window, and peacefully drank in the glory of a new world. But more than once he choked down a sob rising in his throat.

AN UPSET PRICE

Once Secord was as fine a man to look at as you would care to see: with a large intelligent eye, a clear, healthy skin, and a full, brown beard. He walked with a spring, had a gift of conversation, and took life as he found it, never too seriously, yet never carelessly. That was before he left the village of Pontiac in Quebec to offer himself as a surgeon to the American Army. When he came back there was a change in him. He was still handsome, but something of the spring had gone from his walk, the quick light of his eyes had given place to a dark, dreamy expression, his skin became a little dulled, and his talk slower, though not less musical or pleasant. Indeed, his conversation had distinctly improved.

Previously there was an undercurrent of self-consciousness; it was all gone now. He talked as one knowing his audience. His office became again, as it had been before, a rendezvous for the few interesting men of the place, including the Avocat, the Cure, the Little Chemist, and Medallion. They played chess and ecarte for certain hours of certain evenings in the week at Secord's house. Medallion was the first to notice that the wife--whom Secord had married soon after he came back from the war--occasionally put down her work and looked with a curious inquiring expression at her husband as he talked. It struck Medallion that she was puzzled by some change in Secord.

Secord was a brilliant surgeon and physician. With the knife or beside a sick-bed, he was admirable. His intuitive perception, so necessary in his work, was very fine: he appeared to get at the core of a patient's trouble, and to decide upon necessary action with instant and absolute confidence. Some delicate operation performed by him was recorded and praised in the *Lancet*; and he was offered a responsible post in a medical college, and, at the same time, the good-will of a valuable practice. He declined both, to the lasting astonishment, yet personal joy, of the Cure and the Avocat; but, as time went on, not so much to the surprise of the Little Chemist and Medallion. After three years, the sleepy Little Chemist waked up suddenly in his chair one day, and said: "Parbleu, God bless me!" (he loved to mix his native language with English) got up and went over to Secord's office, adjusted his glasses, looked at Secord closely, caught his hand with both of his own, shook it with shy

abruptness, came back to his shop, sat down, and said: "God bless my soul! Regardez ca!"

Medallion made his discovery sooner. Watching closely he had seen a pronounced deliberation infused through all Secord's indolence of manner, and noticed that often, before doing anything, the big eyes debated steadfastly, and the long, slender fingers ran down the beard softly. At times there was a deep meditateness in the eye, again a dusky fire. But there was a certain charm through it all--a languid precision, a slumbering look in the face, a vague undercurrent in the voice, a fantastical flavour to the thought. The change had come so gradually that only Medallion and the wife had a real conception of how great it was. Medallion had studied Secord from every stand-point. At the very first he wondered if there was a woman in it. Much thinking on a woman, whose influence on his life was evil or disturbing, might account somewhat for the change in Secord. But, seeing how fond the man was of his wife, Medallion gave up that idea. It was not liquor, for Secord never touched it. One day, however, when Medallion was selling the furniture of a house, he put up a feather bed, and, as was his custom--for he was a whimsical fellow--let his humour have play. He used many metaphors as to the virtue of the bed, crowning them with the statement that you slept in it dreaming as delicious dreams as though you had eaten poppy, or mandragora, or--He stopped short, said, "By jingo, that's it!" knocked the bed down instantly, and was an utter failure for the rest of the day.

The wife was longer in discovering the truth, but a certain morning, as her husband lay sleeping after an all-night sitting with a patient, she saw lying beside him--it had dropped from his waistcoat pocket--a little bottle full of a dark liquid. She knew that he always carried his medicine-phials in a pocket-case. She got the case, and saw that none was missing. She noticed that the cork of the phial was well worn. She took it out and smelled the liquid. Then she understood. She waited and watched. She saw him after he waked look watchfully round, quietly take a wine-glass, and let the liquid come drop by drop into it from the point of his forefinger. Henceforth she read with understanding the changes in his manner, and saw behind the mingled abstraction and fanciful meditation of his talk.

She had not yet made up her mind what to do. She saw that he hid it from her assiduously. He did so more because he wished not to pain her than from furtiveness. By nature he was open and brave, and had always had a reputation for plainness and sincerity. She was in no sense his equal in intelligence or judgment, nor even in instinct. She was a woman of more impulse and constitutional good-nature than depth. It is probable that he knew that, and refrained from letting her into the knowledge of this vice, contracted in the war when, seriously ill, he was able to drag himself about from patient to patient only by the help of opium. He was alive to his position and its consequences, and faced it. He had no children, and he was glad of this for one reason. He could do nothing now without the drug; it was as necessary as light to him. The little bottle had been his friend so long, that, with his finger on its smooth-edged cork, it was as though he held the tap of life.

The Little Chemist and Medallion kept the thing to themselves, but they understood each other in the matter, and wondered what they could do to cure him. The Little Chemist only shrank back, and said, "No, no, pardon, my friend!" when Medallion suggested that he should speak to Secord. But the Little Chemist was greatly concerned--for had not Secord saved his beloved wife by a clever operation? and was it not her custom to devote a certain hour every week to the welfare of Secord's soul and body, before the shrine of the Virgin? Her husband told her now that Secord was in trouble, and though he was far from being devout himself, he had a shy faith in the great sincerity of his wife. She did her best, and increased her offerings of flowers to the shrine; also, in her simplicity, she sent Secord's wife little jars of jam to comfort him.

One evening the little coterie met by arrangement at the doctor's house. After waiting an hour or two for Secord, who had been called away to a critical case, the Avocat and the Cure went home, leaving polite old-fashioned messages for their absent host; but the Little Chemist and Medallion remained. For a time Mrs. Secord remained with them, then retired, begging them to await her husband, who, she knew, would be grateful if they stayed. The Little Chemist, with timid courtesy, showed her out of the room, then came back and sat down. They were very silent. The Little Chemist took off his glasses a half-dozen times, wiped them, and put them back. Then suddenly turned on Medallion. "You mean to speak to-night?"

"Yes, that's it."

"Regardez ca--well, well!"

Medallion never smoked harder than he did then. The Little Chemist looked at him nervously again and again, listened towards the door, fingered with his tumbler, and at last hearing the sound of sleigh-bells, suddenly came to his feet, and said: "Voila, I will go to my wife." And catching up his cap, and forgetting his overcoat, he trotted away home in a fright.

What Medallion did or said to Secord that night neither ever told. But it must have been a singular scene, for when the humourist pleads or prays there is no pathos like it; and certainly Medallion's eyes were red when he rapped up the Little Chemist at dawn, caught him by the shoulders, turned him round several times, thumped him on the back, and called him a bully old boy; and then, seeing the old wife in her quaint padded night-gown, suddenly hugged her, threw himself into a chair, and almost shouted for a cup of coffee.

At the same time Mrs. Secord was alternately crying and laughing in her husband's arms, and he was saying to her: "I'll make a fight for it, Lesley, a big fight; but you must be patient, for I expect I'll be a devil sometimes without it. Why, I've eaten a drachm a day of the stuff, or drunk its equivalent in the tincture. No, never mind praying; be a brick and fight with me that's the game, my girl."

He did make a fight for it, such an one as few men have made and come out safely. For those who dwell in the Pit never suffer as do they who struggle with this appetite. He was too wise to give it up all at once. He diminished the dose gradually, but still very perceptibly. As it was, it made a marked change in him. The necessary effort of the will gave a kind of hard coldness to his face, and he used to walk his garden for hours at night in conflict with his enemy. His nerves were uncertain, but, strange to say, when (it was not often) any serious case of illness came under his hands, he was somehow able to pull himself together and do his task gallantly enough. But he had had no important surgical case since he began his cure. In his heart he lived in fear of one; for he was not quite sure of himself. In spite of effort to the contrary he became irritable, and his old pleasant fantasies changed to gloomy and bizarre imaginings.

The wife never knew what it cost her husband thus, day by day, to take a foe by the throat and hold him in check. She did not guess that he knew if he dropped back even once he could not regain himself: this was his idiosyncrasy. He did not find her a great help to him in his trouble. She was affectionate, but she had not much penetration even where he was concerned, and she did not grasp how much was at stake. She thought indeed that he should be able to give it up all at once. He was tender with her, but he wished often that she could understand him without explanation on his part. Many a time he took out the little bottle with a reckless hand, but conquered himself. He got most help, perhaps, from the honest, cheerful eye of Medallion and the stumbling timorous affection of the Little Chemist. They were perfectly disinterested friends--his wife at times made him aware that he had done her a wrong, for he had married her with thus appetite on him. He did not defend himself, but he wished she would--even if she had to act it--make him believe in himself more. One morning against his will he was irritable with her, and she said something that burnt like caustic. He smiled ironically, and pushed his newspaper over to her, pointing to a paragraph. It was the announcement that an old admirer of hers whom she had passed by for her husband, had come into a fortune. "Perhaps you've made a mistake," he said.

She answered nothing, but the look she gave was unfortunate for both. He muffled his mouth in his long silken beard as if to smother what he felt impelled to say, then suddenly rose and left the table.

At this time he had reduced his dose of the drug to eight drops twice a day. With a grim courage he resolved to make it five all at once. He did so, and held to it. Medallion was much with him in these days. One morning in the spring he got up, went out in his garden, drew in the fresh, sweet air with a great gulp, picked some lovely crab-apple blossoms, and, with a strange glowing look in his eyes, came in to his wife, put them into her hands, and kissed her. It was the anniversary of their wedding-day. Then, without a word, he took from his pocket the little phial that he had carried so long, rolled it for an instant in his palm, felt its worn, discoloured cork musingly, and threw it out of the window.

"Now, my dear," he whispered, "we will be happy again."

He held to his determination with a stern anxiety. He took a month's vacation, and came back better. He was not so happy as he hoped to be; yet he would not whisper to himself the reason why. He felt that something had failed him somewhere.

One day a man came riding swiftly up to his door to say that his wife's father had met with a bad accident in his great mill. Secord told his wife. A peculiar troubled look came into his face as he glanced carefully over his instruments and through his medicine case. "God, I must do it alone!" he said.

The old man's injury was a dangerous one: a skilful operation was necessary. As Secord stood beside the sufferer, he felt his nerves suddenly go--just as they did in the war before he first took the drug. His wife was in the next room--he could hear her; he wished she would make no sound at all. Unless this operation was performed successfully the sufferer would die--he might die anyhow. Secord tried to gather himself up to his task, but he felt it was of no use. A month later when he was more recovered physically he would be able to perform the operation, but the old man was dying now, while he stood helplessly stroking his big brown beard. He took up his pocket medicine-case, and went out where his wife was.

Excited and tearful, she started up to meet him, painfully inquiring. "Can you save him?" she said. "Oh, James, what is the matter? You are trembling."

"It's just this way, Lesley: my nerve is broken; I can't perform the operation as I am, and he will die in an hour if I don't."

She caught him by the arm. "Can you not be strong? You have a will. Will you not try to save my father, James? Is there no way?"

"Yes, there is one way," he said. He opened the pocket-case and took out a phial of laudanum. "This is the way. I can pull myself together with it. It will save his life." There was a dogged look in his face.

"Well? well?" she said. "Oh, my dear father, will you not keep him here?"

A peculiar cold smile hovered about his lips. "But there is danger to me in this . . . and remember, he is very old!"

"Oh," she cried, "how can you be so shocking, so cruel!" She rocked herself to and fro. "If it will save him--and you need not take it again, ever!"

"But, I tell you--"

"Do you not hear him--he is dying!" She was mad with grief; she hardly knew what she said.

Without a word he dropped the tincture swiftly in a wine-glass of water, drank it off, shivered, drew himself up with a start, gave a sigh as if some huge struggle was over, and went in to where the old man was. Three hours after he told his wife that her father was safe.

When, after a hasty kiss, she left him and went into the room of sickness, and the door closed after her, standing where she had left him he laughed a hard crackling laugh, and said between his teeth:

"An upset price!"

Then he poured out another portion of the dark tincture--the largest he had ever taken--and tossed it off. That night he might have been seen feeling about the grass in a moon-lit garden. At last he put something in his pocket with a quick, harsh chuckle of satisfaction. It was a little black bottle with a well-worn cork.

A FRAGMENT OF LIVES

They met at last, Dubarre, and Villiard, the man who had stolen from him the woman he loved. Both had wronged the woman, but Villiard most, for he had let her die because of jealousy.

They were now in a room alone in the forest of St. Sebastian. Both were quiet, and both knew that the end of their feud was near.

Going to a cupboard Dubarre brought out four glasses and put them on the table. Then from two bottles he poured out what looked like red wine, two glasses from each bottle. Putting the bottles back he returned to the table.

"Do you dare to drink with me?" Dubarre asked, nodding towards the glasses. "Two of the glasses have poison in them, two have good red wine only. We will move them about and then drink. Both may die, or only one of us."

Villiard looked at the other with contracting, questioning eyes.

"You would play that game with me?" he asked, in a mechanical voice.

"It would give me great pleasure." The voice had a strange, ironical tone. "It is a grand sport--as one would take a run at a crevasse and clear it, or fall. If we both fall, we are in good company; if you fall, I have the greater joy of escape; if I fall, you have the same joy."

"I am ready," was the answer. "But let us eat first."

A great fire burned in the chimney, for the night was cool. It filled the room with a gracious heat and with huge, comfortable shadows. Here and there on the wall a tin cup flashed back the radiance of the fire, the barrel of a gun glistened soberly along a rafter, and the long, wiry hair of an otter-skin in the corner sent out little needles of light. Upon the fire a pot was simmering, and a good savour came from it. A wind went lilting by outside the but in tune with the singing of the kettle. The ticking of a huge, old-fashioned repeating-watch on the wall was in unison with these.

Dubarre rose from the table, threw himself upon the little pile of otter-skins, and lay watching Villiard and mechanically studying the little room.

Villiard took the four glasses filled with the wine and laid them on a shelf against the wall, then began to put the table in order for their supper, and to take the pot from the fire.

Dubarre noticed that just above where the glasses stood on the shelf a crucifix was hanging, and that red crystal sparkled in the hands and feet where the nails should be driven in. There was a painful humour in the association. He smiled, then turned his head away, for old memories flashed through his brain--he had been an acolyte once; he had served at the altar.

Suddenly Dubarre rose, took the glasses from the shelf and placed them in the middle of the table--the death's head for the feast.

As they sat down to eat, the eyes of both men unconsciously wandered to the crucifix, attracted by the red sparkle of the rubies. They drank water with the well-cooked meat of the wapiti, though red wine faced them on the table. Each ate heartily; as though a long day were before them and not the shadow of the Long Night. There was no speech save that of the usual courtesies of the table. The fire, and the wind, and the watch seemed the only living things besides themselves, perched there between heaven and earth.

At length the meal was finished, and the two turned in their chairs towards the fire. There was no other light in the room, and on the faces of the two, still and cold, the flame played idly.

"When?" said Dubarre at last. "Not yet," was the quiet reply.

"I was thinking of my first theft--an apple from my brother's plate," said Dubarre, with a dry smile. "You?"

"I, of my first lie."

"That apple was the sweetest fruit I ever tasted."

"And I took the penalty of the lie, but I had no sorrow."

Again there was silence.

"Now?" asked Villiard, after an hour had passed. "I am ready."

They came to the table.

"Shall we bind our eyes?" asked Dubarre. "I do not know the glasses that hold the poison."

"Nor I the bottle that held it. I will turn my back, and do you change about the glasses."

Villiard turned his face towards the timepiece on the wall. As he did so it began to strike--a clear, silvery chime: "One! two! three--!"

Before it had finished striking both men were facing the glasses again.

"Take one," said Dubarre.

Villiard took the one nearest himself. Dubarre took one also. Without a word they lifted the glasses and drank.

"Again," said Dubarre.

"You choose," responded Villiard.

Dubarre lifted the one nearest himself, and Villiard picked up the other. Raising their glasses again, they bowed to each other and drank.

The watch struck twelve, and stopped its silvery chiming.

They both sat down, looking at each other, the light of an enormous chance in their eyes, the tragedy of a great stake in their clinched hands; but the deeper, intenser power was in the face of Dubarre, the explorer.

There was more than power; malice drew down the brows and curled the sensitive upper lip. Each man watched the other for knowledge of his own fate. The glasses lay straggling along the table, emptied of death and life.

All at once a horrible pallor spread over the face of Villiard, and his head jerked forward. He grasped the table with both hands, twitching and trembling. His eyes stared wildly at Dubarre, to whose face the flush of wine had come, whose look was now maliciously triumphant.

Villiard had drunk both glasses of the poison!

"I win!" Dubarre stood up. Then, leaning over the table towards the dying man, he added: "You let her die--well! Would you know the truth? She loved you--always."

Villiard gasped, and his look wandered vaguely along the opposite wall.

Dubarre went on. "I played the game with you honestly, because--because it was the greatest man could play. And I, too, sinned against her. Now die! She loved you--murderer!"

The man's look still wandered distractedly along the wall. The sweat of death was on his face; his lips were moving spasmodically.

Suddenly his look became fixed; he found voice. "Pardon--Jesu!" he said, and stiffened where he sat. His eyes were fixed on the jewelled crucifix. Dubarre snatched it from the wall, and hastening to him held it to his lips: but the warm sparkle of the rubies fell on eyes that were cold as frosted glass. Dubarre saw that he was dead.

"Because the woman loved him!" he said, gazing curiously at the dead man.

He turned, went to the door and opened it, for his breath choked him.

All was still on the wooded heights and in the wide valley.

"Because the woman loved him he repented," said Dubarre again with a half-cynical gentleness as he placed the crucifix on the dead man's breast.

THE MAN THAT DIED AT ALMA

The man who died at Alma had a Kilkenny brogue that you could not cut with a knife, but he was called Kilquhanity, a name as Scotch as McGregor. Kilquhanity was a retired soldier, on pension, and Pontiac was a place of peace and poverty. The only gentry were the Cure, the Avocat, and the young Seigneur, but of the three the only one with a private income was the young Seigneur.

What should such a common man as Kilquhanity do with a private income! It seemed almost suspicious, instead of creditable, to the minds of the simple folk at Pontiac; for they were French, and poor, and laborious, and Kilquhanity drew his pension from the headquarters of the English Government, which they only knew by legends wafted to them over great tracts of country from the city of Quebec.

When Kilquhanity first came with his wife, it was without introductions from anywhere--unlike everybody else in Pontiac, whose family history could be instantly reduced to an exact record by the Cure. He had a smattering of French, which he turned off with oily brusqueness; he was not close-mouthed, he talked freely of events in his past life; and he told some really wonderful tales of his experiences in the British army. He was no braggart, however, and his one great story which gave him the nickname by which he was called at Pontiac, was told far more in a spirit

of laughter at himself than in praise of his own part in the incident.

The first time he told the story was in the house of Medallion the auctioneer.

"Aw the night it was," said Kilquhanity, after a pause, blowing a cloud of tobacco smoke into the air, "the night it was, me darlin's! Bitther cowl'd in that Roosian counthry, though but late summer, and nothin' to ate but a lump of bread, no bigger than a dickybird's skull; nothin' to drink but wather. Turrible, turrible, and for clothes to wear--Mother of Moses! that was a bad day for clothes! We got betune no barrick quilts that night. No stockin' had I insoide me boots, no shirt had I but a harse's quilt sewed an to me; no heart I had insoide me body; nothin' at all but duty an' shtandin' to orders, me b'ys!

"Says Sergeant-Major Kilpatrick to me, 'Kilquhanity,' says he, 'there's betther places than River Alma to live by,' says he. 'Faith, an' by the Liffey I wish I was this moment'--Liffey's in ould Ireland, Frenchies! 'But, Kilquhanity,' says he, 'faith, an' it's the Liffey we'll never see again, an' put that in yer pipe an' smoke it!' And throe for him.

"But that night, aw that night! Ivery bone in me body was achin', and shure me heart was achin' too, for the poor b'ys that were fightin' hard an' gettin' little for it. Bitther cowl'd it was, aw, bitther cowl'd, and the b'ys droppin' down, droppin', droppin', droppin', wid the Roosian bullets in thim!

"'Kilquhanity,' says Sergeant-Major Kilpatrick to me, 'it's this shtandin' still, while we do be droppin', droppin', that girds the soul av yer.' Aw, the sight it was, the sight it was! The b'ys of the rigimint shtandin' shoulder to shoulder, an' the faces av 'm blue wid powder, an' red wid blood, an' the bits o' b'ys droppin' round me loike twigs of an' ould tree in a shtorm. Just a cry an' a bit av a gurgle tru the teeth, an' divil the wan o' thim would see the Liffey side anny more. "'The Roosians are chargin'!' shouts Sergeant-Major Kilpatrick. 'The Roosians are chargin'--here they come!' Shtandin' beside me was a bit of a lump of a b'y, as foine a lad as ever shtood in the boots of me rigimint--aw! the look of his face was the look o' the dead. 'The Roosians are comin'--they're chargin'!' says Sergeant-Major Kilpatrick, and the bit av a b'y, that had nothin' to eat all day, throws down his gun and turns round to run. Eighteen years old he was, only eighteen--just a straight slip of a lad from Malahide. 'Hould on! Teddie,' says I, 'hou'd on! How'll yer face yer mother if yer turn yer back on the inimy of yer counthry?' The b'y looks me in the eyes long enough to wink three times, picks up his gun, an' shtood loike a rock, he did, till the Roosians charged us, roared on us, an' I saw me slip of a b'y go down under the sabre of a damned Cossack. 'Mother!' I heard him say, 'Mother!' an' that's all I heard him say--and the mother waitin' away aff there by the Liffey soide. Aw, wurra, wurra, the b'ys go down to battle and the mothers wait at home! Some of the b'ys come back, but the most of thim shtay where the battle laves 'em. Wurra, wurra, many's the b'y wint down that day by Alma River, an' niver come back! "There I was shtandin', when hell broke loose on the b'ys of me rigimint, and divil

the wan o' me knows if I killed a Roosian that day or not. But Sergeant-Major Kilpatrick--a bit of a liar was the Sergeant-Major--says he: 'It was tin ye killed, Kilquhanity.' He says that to me the noight that I left the rigimint for ever, and all the b'ys shtandin' round and liftin' lasses an' saying, 'Kilquhanity! Kilquhanity! Kilquhanity!' as if it was sugar and honey in their mouths. Aw, the sound of it! 'Kilquhanity,' says he, 'it was tin ye killed;' but aw, b'ys, the Sergeant-Major was an awful liar. If he could be doin' annybody anny good by lyin', shure he would be lyin' all the time.

"But it's little I know how many I killed, for I was killed meself that day. A Roosian sabre claved the shoulder and neck of me, an' down I wint, and over me trampled a squadron of Roosian harses, an' I stopped thinkin'. Aw, so aisy, so aisy, I slipped away out av the fight! The shriekin' and roarin' kept dwindle and dwindle, and I dropped all into a foine shlope, so quiet, so aisy. An' I thought that slip av a lad from the Liffey soide was houlding me hand, and sayin' 'Mother! Mother!' and we both wint ashlope; an' the b'ys of the rigimint when Alma was over, they said to each other, the b'ys they said: 'Kilquhanity's dead.' An' the tranches was dug, an' all we foine dead b'ys was laid in long rows loike candles in the tranches. An' I was laid in among thim, and Sergeant-Major Kilpatrick shtandin' there an' looking at me an' sayin': 'Poor b'y--poor b'y!'

"But when they threw another man on tap of me, I waked up out o' that beautiful shlope, and give him a kick. 'Yer not polite,' says I to meself. Shure, I couldn't shpake--there was no strength in me. An' they threw another man on, an' I kicked again, and the Sergeant-Major he sees it, an' shouts out. 'Kilquhanity's leg is kickin'!' says he. An' they pulled aff the two poor divils that had been thrown o' tap o' me, and the Sergeant-Major lifts me head, an' he says 'Yer not killed, Kilquhanity?' says he.

"Divil a word could I shpake, but I winked at him, and Captain Masham shtandin' by whips out a flask.

"Put that betune his teeth,' says he. Whin I got it there, trust me fur not lettin' it go. An' the Sergeant-Major says to me: 'I have hopes of you, Kilquhanity, when you do be drinkin' loike that.'

"A foine healthy corpse I am; an' a foine thirsty, healthy corpse I am,' says I."

A dozen hands stretched out to give Kilquhanity a drink, for even the best story-teller of Pontiac could not have told his tale so well.

Yet the success achieved by Kilquhanity at such moments was discounted through long months of mingled suspicion and doubtful tolerance. Although both he and his wife were Catholics (so they said, and so it seemed), Kilquhanity never went to Confession or took the Blessed Sacrament. The Cure spoke to Kilquhanity's wife about it, and she said she could do nothing with her husband. Her tongue once loosed, she spoke freely, and what she said was little to the credit of Kilquhanity. Not

that she could urge any horrible things against him; but she railed at minor faults till the Cure dismissed her with some good advice upon wives rehearsing their husband's faults, even to the parish priest.

Mrs. Kilquhanity could not get the Cure to listen to her, but she was more successful elsewhere. One day she came to get Kilquhanity's pension, which was sent every three months through M. Garon, the Avocat. After she had handed over the receipt prepared beforehand by Kilquhanity, she replied to M. Garon's inquiry concerning her husband in these words: "Misther Garon, sir, such a man it is--enough to break the heart of anny woman. And the timper of him--Misther Garon, the timper of him's that awful, awful! No consideration, and that ugly-hearted, got whin a soldier b'y! The things he does--my, my, the things be does!" She threw up her hands with an air of distraction.

"Well, and what does he do, Madame?" asked the Avocat simply.

"An' what he says, too--the awful of it! Ah, the bad sour heart in him! What's he lyin' in his bed for now--an' the New Year comin' on, whin we ought to be praisin' God an' enjoyin' each other's company in this blessed wurruld? What's he lying betune the quilts now fur, but by token of the bad heart in him! It's a wicked could he has, an' how did he come by it? I'll tell ye, Misther Garon. So wild was he, yesterday it was a week, so black mad wid somethin' I'd said to him and somethin' that shlipped from me hand at his head, that he turns his back on me, throws opin the dure, shteps out into the shnow, and shtandin' there alone, he curses the wide wurruld--oh, dear Misther Garon, he cursed the wide wurruld, shtandin' there in the snow! God forgive the black heart of him, shtandin' out there cursin' the wide wurruld!"

The Avocat looked at the Sergeant's wife musingly, the fingers of his hands tapping together, but he did not speak: he was becoming wiser all in a moment as to the ways of women.

"An' now he's in bed, the shtrappin' blasphemmer, fur the could he got shtandin' there in the snow cursin' the wide wurruld. Ah, Misther Garon, pity a poor woman that has to live wid the loikes o' that!"

The Avocat still did not speak. He turned his face away and looked out of the window, where his eyes could see the little house on the hill, which to-day had the Union Jack flying in honour of some battle or victory, dear to Kilquhanity's heart. It looked peaceful enough, the little house lying there in the waste of snow, banked up with earth, and sheltered on the northwest by a little grove of pines. At last M. Garon rose, and lifting himself up and down on his toes as if about to deliver a legal opinion, he coughed slightly, and then said in a dry little voice:

"Madame, I shall have pleasure in calling on your husband. You have not seen the matter in the true light. Madame, I bid you good-day."

That night the Avocat, true to his promise, called on Sergeant Kilquhanity. Kilquhanity was alone in the house. His wife had gone to

the village for the Little Chemist. She had been roused at last to the serious nature of Kilquhanity's illness.

M. Garon knocked. There was no answer. He knocked again more loudly, and still no answer. He opened the door and entered into a clean, warm living-room, so hot that the heat came to him in waves, buffeting his face. Dining, sitting, and drawing-room, it was also a sort of winter kitchen; and side by side with relics of Kilquhanity's soldier-life were clean, bright tins, black saucepans, strings of dried fruit, and well-cured hams. Certainly the place had the air of home; it spoke for the absent termagant.

M. Garon looked round and saw a half-opened door, through which presently came a voice speaking in a laboured whisper. The Avocat knocked gently at the door. "May I come in, Sergeant?" he asked, and entered. There was no light in the room, but the fire in the kitchen stove threw a glow over the bed where the sick man lay. The big hands of the soldier moved restlessly on the quilt.

"Aw, it's the koind av ye!" said Kilquhanity, with difficulty, out of the half shadows.

The Avocat took one burning hand in both of his, held it for a moment, and pressed it two or three times. He did not know what to say.

"We must have a light," said he at last, and taking a candle from the shelf he lighted it at the stove and came into the bedroom again. This time he was startled. Even in this short illness, Kilquhanity's flesh had dropped away from him, leaving him but a bundle of bones, on which the skin quivered with fever. Every word the sick man tried to speak cut his chest like a knife, and his eyes half started from his head with the agony of it. The Avocat's heart sank within him, for he saw that a life was hanging in the balance. Not knowing what to do, he tucked in the bedclothes gently.

"I do be thinkin'," said the strained, whispering voice--"I do be thinkin' I could shmoke."

The Avocat looked round the room, saw the pipe on the window, and cutting some tobacco from a "plug," he tenderly filled the old black corn-cob. Then he put the stem in Kilquhanity's mouth and held the candle to the bowl. Kilquhanity smiled, drew a long breath, and blew out a cloud of thick smoke. For a moment he puffed vigorously, then, all at once, the pleasure of it seemed to die away, and presently the bowl dropped down on his chin. M. Garon lifted it away. Kilquhanity did not speak, but kept saying something over and over again to himself, looking beyond M. Garon abstractedly.

At that moment the front door of the house opened, and presently a shrill voice came through the door: "Shmokin', shmokin', are ye, Kilquhanity? As soon as me back's turned, it's playin' the fool--" She stopped short, seeing the Avocat.

"Beggin' yer pardon, Misther Garon," she said, "I thought it was only Kilquhanity here, an' he wid no more sense than a babby."

Kilquhanity's eyes closed, and he buried one side of his head in the pillow, that her shrill voice should not pierce his ears.

"The Little Chemist 'll be comin' in a minit, dear Misther Garon," said the wife presently, and she began to fuss with the bedclothes and to be nervously and uselessly busy.

"Aw, lave thim alone, darlin'," whispered Kilquhanity, tossing. Her officiousness seemed to hurt him more than the pain in his chest.

M. Garon did not wait for the Little Chemist to arrive, but after pressing the Sergeant's hand he left the house and went straight to the house of the Cure, and told him in what condition was the black sheep of his flock.

When M. Garon returned to his own home he found a visitor in his library. It was a woman, between forty and fifty years of age, who rose slowly to her feet as the Avocat entered, and, without preliminary, put into his hands a document.

"That is who I am," she said. "Mary Muddock that was, Mary Kilquhanity that is."

The Avocat held in his hands the marriage lines of Matthew Kilquhanity of the parish of Malahide and Mary Muddock of the parish of St. Giles, London. The Avocat was completely taken aback. He blew nervously through his pale fingers, raised himself up and down on his toes, and grew pale through suppressed excitement. He examined the certificate carefully, though from the first he had no doubt of its accuracy and correctness.

"Well?" said the woman, with a hard look in her face and a hard note in her voice. "Well?"

The Avocat looked at her musingly for a moment. All at once there had been unfolded to him Kilquhanity's story. In his younger days Kilquhanity had married this woman with a face of tin and a heart of leather. It needed no confession from Kilquhanity's own lips to explain by what hard paths he had come to the reckless hour when, at Blackpool, he had left her for ever, as he thought. In the flush of his criminal freedom he had married again--with the woman who shared his home on the little hillside, behind the Parish Church, she believing him a widower. Mary Muddock, with the stupidity of her class, had never gone to the right quarters to discover his whereabouts until a year before this day when she stood in the Avocat's library. At last, through the War Office, she had found the whereabouts of her missing Matthew. She had gathered her little savings together, and, after due preparation, had sailed away to Canada to find the soldier boy whom she had never given anything but bad hours in all the days of his life with her.

"Well," said the woman, "you're a lawyer--have you nothing to say? You pay his pension--next time you'll pay it to me. I'll teach him to leave me and my kid and go off with an Irish cook!"

The Avocat looked her steadily in the eyes, and then delivered the strongest blow that was possible from the opposite side of the case. "Madame," said he, "Madame, I regret to inform you that Matthew Kilquhanity is dying."

"Dying, is he?" said the woman, with a sudden change of voice and manner, but her whine did not ring true. "The poor darlin', and only that Irish hag to care for him! Has he made a will?" she added eagerly.

Kilquhanity had made no will, and the little house on the hillside, and all that he had, belonged to this woman who had spoiled the first part of his life, and had come now to spoil the last part.

An hour later the Avocat, the Cure, and the two women stood in the chief room of the little house on the hillside. The door was shut between the two rooms, and the Little Chemist was with Kilquhanity. The Cure's hand was on the arm of the first wife and the Avocat's upon the arm of the second. The two women were glaring eye to eye, having just finished as fine a torrent of abuse of each other and of Kilquhanity as can be imagined. Kilquhanity himself, with the sorrow of death upon him, though he knew it not, had listened to the brawl, his chickens come home to roost at last. The first Mrs. Kilquhanity had sworn, with an oath that took no account of the Cure's presence, that not a stick nor a stone nor a rag nor a penny should that Irish slattern have of Matthew Kilquhanity's!

The Cure and the Avocat had quieted them at last, and the Cure spoke sternly now to both women.

"In the presence of death," said he, "have done with your sinful clatter. Stop quarrelling over a dying man. Let him go in peace--let him go in peace! If I hear one word more," he added sternly, "I will turn you both out of the house into the night. I will have the man die in peace."

Opening the door of the bedroom, the Cure went in and shut the door, bolting it quietly behind him. The Little Chemist sat by the bedside, and Kilquhanity lay as still as a babe upon the bed. His eyes were half closed, for the Little Chemist had given him an opiate to quiet the terrible pain.

The Cure saw that the end was near. He touched Kilquhanity's arm: "My son," said he, "look up. You have sinned; you must confess your sins, and repent."

Kilquhanity looked up at him with dazed but half smiling eyes. "Are they gone? Are the women gone?" The Cure nodded his head. Kilquhanity's eyes closed and opened again. "They're gone, thin! Oh, the foine of it, the foine of it!" he whispered. "So quiet, so aisy, so quiet! Faith, I'll just be shlaping! I'll be shlaping now."

His eyes closed, but the Cure touched his arm again. "My son," said he, "look up. Do you thoroughly and earnestly repent you of your sins?"

His eyes opened again. "Yis, father, oh yis! There's been a dale o' noise--there's been a dale o' noise in the wurruld, father," said he. "Oh, so quiet, so quiet now! I do be shlaping."

A smile came upon his face. "Oh, the foine of it! I do be shlaping-shlaping."

And he fell into a noiseless Sleep.

THE BARON OF BEAUGARD

"The Manor House at Beaugard, monsieur? Ah, certainlee, I mind it very well. It was the first in Quebec, and there are many tales. It had a chapel and a gallows. Its baron, he had the power of life and death, and the right of the seigneur--you understand?--which he used only once; and then what trouble it made for him and the woman, and the barony, and the parish, and all the country!"

"What is the whole story, Larue?" said Medallion, who had spent months in the seigneur's company, stalking game, and tales, and legends of the St. Lawrence.

Larue spoke English very well--his mother was English.

"Mais, I do not know for sure; but the Abbe Frontone, he and I were snowed up together in that same house which now belongs to the Church, and in the big fireplace, where we sat on a bench, toasting our knees and our bacon, he told me the tale as he knew it. He was a great scholar--there is none greater. He had found papers in the wall of the house, and from the Gover'ment chest he got more. Then there were the tales handed down, and the records of the Church--for she knows the true story of every man that has come to New France from first to last. So, because I have a taste for tales, and gave him some, he told me of the Baron of Beaugard, and that time he took the right of the seigneur, and the end of it all.

"Of course it was a hundred and fifty years ago, when Bigot was Intendant--ah, what a rascal was that Bigot, robber and deceiver! He never stood by a friend, and never fought fair a foe--so the Abbe said. Well, Beaugard was no longer young. He had built the Manor House, he had put up his gallows, he had his vassals, he had been made a lord. He had quarrelled with Bigot, and had conquered, but at great cost; for Bigot had such power, and the Governor had trouble enough to care for himself against Bigot, though he was Beaugard's friend.

"Well, there was a good lump of a fellow who had been a soldier, and he picked out a girl in the Seigneury of Beaugard to make his wife. It is said the girl herself was not set for the man, for she was of finer stuff than the peasants about her, and showed it. But her father and mother had a dozen other children, and what was this girl, this Falise, to do? She said yes to the man, the time was fixed for the marriage, and it came along.

"So. At the very hour of the wedding Beaugard came by, for, the church was in mending, and he had given leave it should be in his own chapel. Well, he rode by just as the bride was coming out with the man--Garoche. When Beaugard saw Falise, he gave a whistle, then spoke in his throat, reined up his horse, and got down. He fastened his eyes on the girl's. A strange look passed between them--he had never seen her before, but she had seen him often, and when he was gone had helped the housekeeper with his rooms. She had carried away with her a stray glove of his. Of course it sounds droll, and they said of her when all came out that it was wicked; but evil is according to a man's own heart, and the girl had hid this glove as she hid whatever was in her soul--hid it even from the priest.

"Well, the Baron looked and she looked, and he took off his hat, stepped forward, and kissed her on the cheek. She turned pale as a ghost, and her eyes took the colour that her cheeks lost. When he stepped back he looked close at the husband. 'What is your name?' he said. 'Garoche, M'sieu' le Baron,' was the reply. 'Garoche, Garoche,' he said, eyeing him up and down. 'You have been a soldier?' 'Yes, M'sieu' le Baron.' 'You have served with me?' 'Against you, M'sieu' le Baron . . . when Bigot came fighting.' 'Better against me than for me,' said the Baron, speaking to himself, though he had so strong a voice that what he said could be heard by those near him--that is, those who were tall, for he was six and a half feet, with legs and shoulders like a bull.

"He stooped and stroked the head of his hound for a moment, and all the people stood and watched him, wondering what next. At last he said: 'And what part played you in that siege, Garoche?' Garoche looked troubled, but answered: 'It was in the way of duty, M'sieu' le Baron--I with five others captured the relief-party sent from your cousin the Seigneur of Vadrome.' 'Oh,' said the Baron, looking sharp, 'you were in that, were you? Then you know what happened to the young Marmette?' Garoche trembled a little, but drew himself up and said: 'M'sieu' le Baron, he tried to kill the Intendant--there was no other way.' 'What part played you in that, Garoche?' Some trembled, for they knew the truth, and they feared the mad will of the Baron. 'I ordered the firing-party, M'sieu' le Baron,' he answered.

"The Baron's eyes got fierce and his face hardened, but he stooped and drew the ears of the hound through his hand softly. 'Marmette was my cousin's son, and had lived with me,' he said. 'A brave lad, and he had a nice hatred of vileness--else he had not died.' A strange smile played on his lips for a moment, then he looked at Falise steadily. Who can tell what was working in his mind! 'War is war,' he went on, 'and Bigot

was your master, Garoche; but the man pays for his master's sins this way or that. Yet I would not have it different, no, not a jot.' Then he turned round to the crowd, raised his hat to the Cure, who stood on the chapel steps, once more looked steadily at Falise, and said: 'You shall all come to the Manor House, and have your feasting there, and we will drink to the home-coming of the fairest woman in my barony.' With that he turned round, bowed to Falise, put on his hat, caught the bride through his arm, and led his horse to the Manor House.

"This was in the afternoon. Of course, whether they wished or not, Garoche and Falise could not refuse, and the people were glad enough, for they would have a free hand at meat and wine, the Baron being liberal of table. And it was as they guessed, for though the time was so short, the people at Beaugard soon had the tables heavy with food and drink. It was just at the time of candle-lighting the Baron came in and gave a toast. 'To the dwellers in Eden to-night,' he said--'Eden against the time of the Angel and the Sword.' I do not think that any except the Cure and the woman understood, and she, maybe, only because a woman feels the truth about a thing, even when her brain does not. After they had done shouting to his toast, he said a good-night to all, and they began to leave, the Cure among the first to go, with a troubled look in his face.

"As the people left, the Baron said to Garoche and Falise: 'A moment with me before you go.' The woman started, for she thought of one thing, and Garoche started, for he thought of another--the siege of Beaugard and the killing of young Marmette. But they followed the Baron to his chamber. Coming in, he shut the door on them. Then he turned to Garoche. 'You will accept the roof and bed of Beaugard to-night, my man,' he said, 'and come to me here at nine tomorrow morning.' Garoche stared hard for an instant. 'Stay here!' said Garoche, 'Falise and me stay here in the Manor, M'sieu' le Baron!' 'Here, even here, Garoche; so good-night to you,' said the Baron. Garoche turned towards the girl. 'Then come, Falise,' he said, and reached out his hand. 'Your room, Garoche, shall be shown you at once,' the Baron added softly, 'the lady's at her pleasure.'

"Then a cry burst from Garoche, and he sprang forward, but the Baron waved him back. 'Stand off,' he said, 'and let the lady choose between us.' 'She is my wife,' said Garoche. 'I am your Seigneur,' said the other. 'And there is more than that,' he went on; 'for, damn me, she is too fine stuff for you, and the Church shall untie what she has tied to-day!' At that Falise fainted, and the Baron caught her as she fell. He laid her on a couch, keeping an eye on Garoche the while. 'Loose her gown,' he said, 'while I get brandy.' Then he turned to a cupboard, poured liquor, and came over. Garoche had her dress open at the neck and bosom, and was staring at something on her breast. The Baron saw also, stooped with a strange sound in his throat, and picked it up. 'My glove!' he said. 'And on her wedding-day!' He pointed. 'There on the table is its mate, fished this morning from my hunting-coat--a pair the Governor gave me. You see, man, you see her choice!'

"At that he stooped and put some brandy to her lips. Garoche drew back sick and numb, and did nothing, only stared. Falise came to herself

soon, and when she felt her dress open, gave a cry. Garoche could have killed her then, when he saw her shudder from him, as if afraid, over towards the Baron, who held the glove in his hand, and said: 'See, Garoche, you had better go. In the next room they will tell you where to sleep. To-morrow, as I said, you will meet me here. We shall have things to say, you and I.' Ah, that Baron, he had a queer mind, but in truth he loved the woman, as you shall see!

"Garoche got up without a word, went to the door and opened it, the look of the Baron and the woman following him, for there was a devil in his eye. In the other room there were men waiting, and he was taken to a chamber and locked in. You can guess what that night must have been to him!"

"What was it to the Baron and Falise?" asked Medallion.

"M'sieu', what do you think? Beaugard had never had an eye for women; loving his hounds, fighting, quarrelling, doing wild, strong things. So, all at once, he was face to face with a woman who has the look of love in her face, who was young, and fine of body--so the Abbe said--and was walking to marriage at her father's will and against her own, carrying the Baron's glove in her bosom. What should Beaugard do? But no, ah no, m'sieu', not as you think, not quite! Wild, with the bit in his teeth, yes; but at heart--well, here was the one woman for him. He knew it all in a minute, and he would have her once and for all, and till death should come their way. And so he said to her, as he raised her, she drawing back afraid, her heart hungering for him, yet fear in her eyes, and her fingers trembling as she softly pushed him from her. You see, she did not know quite what was in his heart. She was the daughter of a tenant vassal, who had lived in the family of a grand seigneur in her youth, the friend of his child--that was all, and that was where she got her manners and her mind.

"She got on her feet and said: 'M'sieu' le Baron, you will let me go--to my husband. I cannot stay here. Oh, you are great, you are noble, you would not make me sorry, make me to hate myself--and you! I have only one thing in the world of any price--you would not steal my happiness?' He looked at her steadily in the eyes, and said: 'Will it make you happy to go to Garoche?' She raised her hands and wrung them. 'God knows, God knows, I am his wife,' she said helplessly, 'and he loves me.' 'And God knows, God knows,' said the Baron, 'it is all a question of whether one shall feed and two go hungry, or two gather and one have the stubble! Shall not he stand in the stubble? What has he done to merit you?

"What would he do? You are for the master, not the man; for love, not the feeding on; for the Manor House and the hunt, not the cottage and the loom.'

"She broke into tears, her heart thumping in her throat. 'I am for what the Church did for me this day,' she said. 'O sir, I pray you, forgive me and let me go. Do not punish me, but forgive me--and let me go. I was wicked to wear your glove--wicked, wicked.' 'But no,' was his

reply, 'I shall not forgive you so good a deed, and you shall not go. And what the Church did for you this day she shall undo--by all the saints, she shall! You came sailing into my heart this hour past on a strong wind, and you shall not slide out on an ebb-tide. I have you here, as your Seigneur, but I have you here as a man who will--'

"He sat down by her at that point, and whispered softly in her ear; at which she gave a cry which had both gladness and pain. 'Surely, even that,' he said, catching her to his breast. 'And the Baron of Beaugard never broke his word.' What should be her reply? Does not a woman when she truly loves always believe? That is the great sign. She slid to her knees and dropped her head into the hollow of his arm. 'I do not understand these things,' she said, 'but I know that the other was death, and this is life. And yet I know, too, for my heart says so, that the end--the end, will be death.'

"'Tut, tut, my flower, my wild-rose!' he said. 'Of course the end of all is death, but we will go a-Maying first, come October, and let the world break over us when it must. We are for Maying now, my rose of all the world!' It was as if he meant more than he said, as if he saw what would come in that October which all New France never forgot, when, as he said, the world broke over them.

"The next morning the Baron called Garoche to him. The man was like some mad buck harried by the hounds, and he gnashed his teeth behind his shut lips. The Baron eyed him curiously, yet kindly, too, as well he might, for when was ever man to hear such a speech as came to Garoche the morning after his marriage? 'Garoche,' the Baron said, having waved his men away, 'as you see, the lady made her choice--and for ever. You and she have said your last farewell in this world--for the wife of the Baron of Beaugard can have nothing to say to Garoche the soldier.' At that Garoche snarled out, 'The wife of the Baron of Beaugard, that is a lie to shame all hell.' The Baron wound the lash of a riding-whip round and round his fingers quietly and said: 'It is no lie, my man, but the truth.' Garoche eyed him savagely, and growled: 'The Church made her my wife yesterday; and you--you--you--ah, you who had all--you with your money and place, which could get all easy, you take the one thing I have! You, the grand seigneur, are only a common robber! Ah, Jesu--if you would but fight me!'

"The Baron, very calm, said: 'First, Garoche, the lady was only your wife by a form which the Church shall set aside--it could never have been a true marriage. Second, it is no stealing to take from you what you did not have. I took what was mine--remember the glove! For the rest--to fight you? No, my churl, you know that's impossible. You may shoot me from behind a tree or a rock, but swording with you--come, come, a pretty gossip for the Court! Then, why wish a fight? Where would you be, as you stood before me--you!' The Baron stretched himself up, and smiled down at Garoche. 'You have your life, man; take it and go--to the farthest corner of New France, and show not your face here again. If I find you ever again in Beaugard I will have you whipped from parish to parish. Here is money for you--good gold coins. Take them, and go.'

"Garoche got still and cold as stone. He said in a low, harsh voice: 'M'sieu' le Baron, you are a common thief, a wolf, a snake. Such men as you come lower than Judas. As God has an eye to see, you shall pay all one day. I do not fear you nor your men nor your gallows. You are a jackal, and the woman has a filthy heart--a ditch of shame.'

"The Baron drew up his arm like lightning, and the lash of his whip came singing across Garoche's pale face. Where it passed, a red welt rose, but the man never stirred. The arm came up again, but a voice behind the Baron said: 'Ah no, no, not again!' There stood Falise. Both men looked at her. 'I have heard Garoche,' she said. 'He does not judge me right. My heart is no filthy ditch of shame; but it was breaking when I came from the altar with him yesterday. Yet I would have been a true wife to him after all. A ditch of shame--ah, Garoche--Garoche! And you said you loved me, and that nothing could change you!'

"The Baron said to her: 'Why have you come, Falise? I forbade you.' 'Oh, my lord,' she answered, 'I feared--for you both! When men go mad because of women a devil enters into them.' The Baron, taking her by the hand, said: 'Permit me,' and he led her to the door for her to pass out. She looked back sadly at Garoche, standing for a minute very still. Then Garoche said: 'I command you, come with me; you are my wife.' She did not reply, but shook her head at him. Then he spoke out high and fierce: 'May no child be born to you. May a curse fall on you. May your fields be barren, and your horses and cattle die. May you never see nor hear good things. May the waters leave their courses to drown you, and the hills their bases to bury you, and no hand lay you in decent graves!'

"The woman put her hands to her ears and gave a little cry, and the Baron pushed her gently on, and closed the door after her. Then he turned on Garoche. 'Have you said all you wish?' he asked. 'For, if not, say on, and then go; and go so far you cannot see the sky that covers Beaugard. We are even now--we can cry quits. But that I have a little injured you, you should be done for instantly. But hear me: if I ever see you again, my gallows shall end you straight. Your tongue has been gross before the mistress of this Manor; I will have it torn out if it so much as syllables her name to me or to the world again. She is dead to you. Go, and go for ever!'

"He put a bag of money on the table, but Garoche turned away from it, and without a word left the room, and the house, and the parish, and said nothing to any man of the evil that had come to him.

"But what talk was there, and what dreadful things were said at first--that Garoche had sold his wife to the Baron; that he had been killed and his wife taken; that the Baron kept him a prisoner in a cellar under the Manor House! And all the time there was Falise with the Baron--very quiet and sweet and fine to see, and going to Chapel every day, and to Mass on Sundays--which no one could understand, any more than they could see why she should be called the Baroness of Beaugard; for had they all not seen her married to Garoche? And there were many people who thought her vile. Yet truly, at heart, she was not so--not at all. Then it was said that there was to be a new marriage; that the Church would let it be

so, doing and undoing, and doing again. But the weeks and the months went by, and it was never done. For, powerful as the Baron was, Bigot the Intendant was powerful also, and fought the thing with all his might. The Baron went to Quebec to see the Bishop and the Governor, and though promises were made, nothing was done. It must go to the King and then to the Pope, and from the Pope to the King again, and so on. And the months and the years went by as they waited, and with them came no child to the Manor House of Beaugard. That was the only sad thing--that and the waiting, so far as man could see. For never were man and woman truer to each other than these, and never was a lady of the Manor kinder to the poor, or a lord freer of hand to his vassals. He would bluster sometimes, and string a peasant up by the heels, but his gallows was never used; and, what was much in the minds of the people, the Cure did not refuse the woman the sacrament.

"At last the Baron, fierce because he knew that Bigot was the cause of the great delay, so that he might not call Falise his wife, seized a transport on the river, which had been sent to brutally levy upon a poor gentleman, and when Bigot's men resisted, shot them down. Then Bigot sent against Beaugard a company of artillery and some soldiers of the line. The guns were placed on a hill looking down on the Manor House across the little river. In the evening the cannons arrived, and in the morning the fight was to begin. The guns were loaded and everything was ready. At the Manor all was making ready also, and the Baron had no fear.

"But Falise's heart was heavy, she knew not why. 'Eugene,' she said, 'if anything should happen!' 'Nonsense, my Falise,' he answered; 'what should happen?' 'If--if you were taken--were killed!' she said. 'Nonsense, my rose,' he said again, 'I shall not be killed. But if I were, you should be at peace here.' 'Ah, no, no!' said she. 'Never. Life to me is only possible with you. I have had nothing but you--none of those things which give peace to other women--none. But I have been happy--yes, very happy. And, God forgive me, Eugene, I cannot regret, and I never have! But it has been always and always my prayer that, when you die, I may die with you--at the same moment. For I cannot live without you, and, besides, I would like to go to the good God with you to speak for us both; for oh, I loved you, I loved you, and I love you still, my husband, my adored!'

"He stooped--he was so big, and she but of middle height--kissed her, and said: 'See, my Falise, I am of the same mind. We have been happy in life, and we could well be happy in death together.' So they sat long, long into the night and talked to each other--of the days they had passed together, of cheerful things, she trying to comfort herself, and he trying to bring smiles to her lips. At last they said good-night, and he lay down in his clothes; and after a few moments she was sleeping like a child. But he could not sleep, for he lay thinking of her and of her life--how she had come from humble things and fitted in with the highest. At last, at break of day, he arose and went outside. He looked up at the hill where Bigot's two guns were. Men were already stirring there. One man was standing beside the gun, and another not far behind. Of course the Baron could not know that the man behind the gunner said: 'Yes, you

may open the dance with an early salute;' and he smiled up boldly at the hill and went into the house, and stole to the bed of his wife to kiss her before he began the day's fighting. He looked at her a moment, standing over her, and then stooped and softly put his lips to hers.

"At that moment the gunner up on the hill used the match, and an awful thing happened. With the loud roar the whole hillside of rock and gravel and sand split down, not ten feet in front of the gun, moved with horrible swiftness upon the river, filled its bed, turned it from its course, and, sweeping on, swallowed the Manor House of Beaugard. There had been a crack in the hill, the water of the river had sapped its foundations, and it needed only this shock to send it down.

"And so, as the woman wished: the same hour for herself and the man! And when at last their prison was opened by the hands of Bigot's men, they were found cheek by cheek, bound in the sacred marriage of Death.

"But another had gone the same road, for, at the awful moment, beside the bursted gun, the dying gunner, Garoche, lifted up his head, saw the loose travelling hill, and said with his last breath: 'The waters drown them, and the hills bury them, and--'

"He had his way with them, and after that perhaps the great God had His way with him perhaps."

THE TUNE MCGILVERAY PLAYED

McGilveray has been dead for over a hundred years, but there is a parish in Quebec where his tawny-haired descendants still live. They have the same sort of freckles on their faces as had their ancestor, the bandmaster of Anstruther's regiment, and some of them have his taste for music, yet none of them speak his language or with his brogue, and the name of McGilveray has been gallicised to Magille.

In Pontiac, one of the Magilles, the fiddler of the parish, made the following verse in English as a tribute of admiration for an heroic deed of his ancestor, of which the Cure of the parish, the good M. Santonge, had told him:

"Piff! poem! ka-zoon, ka-zoon!
That is the way of the organ tune--
And the ships are safe that day!
Piff! poum! kazoon, kazoon!
And the Admiral light his pipe and say:
'Bully for us, we are not kill!
Who is to make the organ play
Make it say zoon-kazoon?
You with the coronet come this way--

You are the man, Magillel
Piff! poum! kazoon, kazoon!"

Now, this is the story of McGilveray the bandmaster of Anstruther's regiment:

It was at the time of the taking of Quebec, the summer of 1759. The English army had lain at Montmorenci, at the Island of Orleans, and at Point Levis; the English fleet in the basin opposite the town, since June of that great year, attacking and retreating, bombarding and besieging, to no great purpose. For within the walls of the city, and on the shore of Beauport, protected by its mud flats--a splendid moat--the French more than held their own.

In all the hot months of that summer, when parishes were ravaged with fire and sword, and the heat was an excuse for almost any lapse of virtue, McGilveray had not been drunk once--not once. It was almost unnatural. Previous to that, McGilveray's career had been chequered. No man had received so many punishments in the whole army, none had risen so superior to them as had he, none had ever been shielded from wrath present and to come as had this bandmaster of Anstruther's regiment. He had no rivals for promotion in the regiment--perhaps that was one reason; he had a good temper and an overwhelming spirit of fun--perhaps that was another.

He was not remarkable to the vision--scarcely more than five feet four; with an eye like a gimlet, red hair tied in a queue, a big mouth, and a chest thrown out like the breast of a partridge--as fine a figure of a man in miniature as you should see. When intoxicated, his tongue rapped out fun and fury like a triphammer. Alert-minded drunk or sober, drunk, he was lightning-tongued, and he could play as well drunk as sober, too; but more than once a sympathetic officer altered the tactics that McGilveray might not be compelled to march, and so expose his condition. Standing still he was quite fit for duty. He never got really drunk "at the top." His brain was always clear, no matter how useless were his legs.

But the wonderful thing was that for six months McGilveray's legs were as steady as his head was right. At first the regiment was unbelieving, and his resolution to drink no more was scoffed at in the non-com mess. He stuck to it, however, and then the cause was searched for--and not found. He had not turned religious, he was not fanatical, he was of sound mind--what was it? When the sergeant-major suggested a woman, they howled him down, for they said McGilveray had not made love to women since the day of his weaning, and had drunk consistently all the time.

Yet it was a woman.

A fortnight or so after Wolfe's army and Saunders's fleet had sat down before Quebec, McGilveray, having been told by a sentry at Montmorenci where Anstruther's regiment was camped, that a French girl on the other side of the stream had kissed her hand to him and sung across in laughing insolence:

"Malbrouk s'en va t'en guerre,"

he had forthwith set out to hail this daughter of Gaul, if perchance she might be seen again.

At more than ordinary peril he crossed the river on a couple of logs, lashed together, some distance above the spot where the picket had seen Mademoiselle. It was a moonlight night, and he might easily have been picked off by a bullet, if a wary sentry had been alert and malicious. But the truth was that many of these pickets on both sides were in no wise unfriendly to each other, and more than once exchanged tobacco and liquor across the stream. As it chanced, however, no sentry saw McGilveray, and presently, safely landed, he made his way down the stream. Even at the distance he was from the falls, the rumble of them came up the long walls of firs and maples with a strange, half-moaning sound--all else was still. He came down until he was opposite the spot where his English picket was posted, and then he halted and surveyed his ground.

Nothing human in sight, no sound of life, no sign of habitation. At this moment, however, his stupidity in thus rushing into danger, the foolishness of pursuing a woman whom he had never seen, and a French woman at that, the punishment that would be meted out to him if his adventure was discovered--all these came to him.

They stunned him for a moment, and then presently, as if in defiance of his own thoughts, he began to sing softly:

"Malbrouk s'en va t'en guerre."

Suddenly, in one confused moment, he was seized, and a hand was clapped over his mouth. Three French soldiers had him in their grip--stalwart fellows they were, of the Regiment of Bearn. He had no strength to cope with them, he at once saw the futility of crying out, so he played the eel, and tried to slip from the grasp of his captors. But though he gave the trio an awkward five minutes he was at last entirely overcome, and was carried away in triumph through the woods. More than once they passed a sentry, and more than once campfires round which soldiers slept or dozed. Now and again one would raise his head, and with a laugh, or a "Sapristi!" or a "Sacre bleu!" drop back into comfort again.

After about ten minutes' walk he was brought to a small wooden house, the door was thrown open, he was tossed inside, and the soldiers entered after. The room was empty save for a bench, some shelves, a table, on which a lantern burned, and a rude crucifix on the wall. McGilveray sat down on the bench, and in five minutes his feet were shackled, while a chain fastened to a staple in the wall held him in secure captivity.

"How you like yourself now?" asked a huge French corporal who had learned English from an English girl at St. Malo years before.

"If you'd tie a bit o' pink ribbon round me neck, I'd die wid pride,"

said McGilveray, spitting on the ground in defiance at the same time.

The big soldier laughed, and told his comrades what the bandmaster had said. One of them grinned, but the other frowned sullenly, and said:

"Avez vous tabac?"

"Havey you to-ba-co?" said the big soldier instantly--interpreting.

"Not for a Johnny Crapaud like you, and put that in your pipe and shmoke it!" said McGilveray, winking at the big fellow, and spitting on the ground before the surly one, who made a motion as if he would bayonet McGilveray where he sat.

"He shall die--the cursed English soldier," said Johnny Crapaud.

"Some other day will do," said McGilveray. "What does he say?" asked Johnny Crapaud.

"He says he'll give each of us three pounds of tobacco, if we let him go," answered the corporal. McGilveray knew by the corporal's voice that he was lying, and he also knew that, somehow, he had made a friend.

"Y'are lyin', me darlin', me bloody beauty!" interposed McGilveray.

"If we don't take him to headquarters now he'll send across and get the tobacco," interpreted the corporal to Johnny Crapaud.

"If he doesn't get the tobacco he'll be hung for a spy," said Johnny Crapaud, turning on his heel. "Do we all agree?" said the corporal.

The others nodded their heads, and, as they went out, McGilveray said after them:

"I'll dance a jig on yer sepulchrees, ye swobs!" he roared, and he spat on the ground again in defiance. Johnny Crapaud turned to the corporal.

"I'll kill him very dead," said he, "if that tobacco doesn't come. You tell him so," he added, jerking a thumb towards McGilveray. "You tell him so."

The corporal stayed when the others went out, and, in broken English, told McGilveray so.

"I'll play a hornpipe, an' his gory shroud is round him," said McGilveray.

The corporal grinned from ear to ear. "You like a chew tabac?" said he, pulling out a dirty knob of a black plug.

McGilveray had found a man after his own heart. "Sing a song a-sixpence," said he, "what sort's that for a gintleman an' a corporal, too? Feel in me trousies pocket," said he, "which is fur me frinds for

iver." McGilveray had now hopes of getting free, but if he had not taken a fancy to "me baby corporal," as he called the Frenchman, he would have made escape or release impossible, by insulting him and every one of them as quick as winking.

After the corporal had emptied one pocket, "Now the other, man-o-wee-wee!" said McGilveray, and presently the two were drinking what the flask from the "trousies pocket" contained. So well did McGilveray work upon the Frenchman's bonhomie that the corporal promised he should escape. He explained how McGilveray should be freed--that at midnight some one would come and release him, while he, the corporal, was with his companions, so avoiding suspicion as to his own complicity. McGilveray and the corporal were to meet again and exchange courtesies after the manner of brothers--if the fortunes of war permitted.

McGilveray was left alone. To while away the time he began to whistle to himself, and what with whistling, and what with winking and talking to the lantern on the table, and calling himself painful names, he endured his captivity well enough.

It was near midnight when the lock turned in the door and presently stepped inside--a girl.

"Malbrouk s'en va t'en guerre," said she, and nodded her head to him humorously.

By this McGilveray knew that this was the maid that had got him into all this trouble. At first he was inclined to say so, but she came nearer, and one look of her black eyes changed all that.

"You've a way wid you, me darlin'," said McGilveray, not thinking that she might understand.

"A leetla way of my own," she answered in broken English.

McGilveray started. "Where did you learn it?" he asked, for he had had two surprises that night.

"Of my mother--at St. Malo," she replied. "She was half English--of Jersey. You are a naughty boy," she added, with a little gurgle of laughter in her throat. "You are not a good soldier to go a-chase of the French girls 'cross of the river."

"Shure I am not a good soldier thin. Music's me game. An' the band of Anstruther's rigimint's mine."

"You can play tunes on a drum?" she asked, mischievously.

"There's wan I'd play to the voice av you," he said, in his softest brogue. "You'll be unloosin' me, darlin'?" he added.

She stooped to undo the shackles on his ankles. As she did so he leaned over as if to kiss her. She threw back her head in disgust.

"You have been drink," she said, and she stopped her work of freeing him.

"What'd wet your eye--no more," he answered. She stood up. "I will not," she said, pointing to the shackles, "if you drink some more--nevare some more--nevare!"

"Divil a drop thin, darlin', till we fly our flag yander," pointing towards where he supposed the town to be.

"Not till then?" she asked, with a merry little sneer. "Ver' well, it is comme ca!" She held out her hand. Then she burst into a soft laugh, for his hands were tied. "Let me kiss it," he said, bending forward.

"No, no, no," she said. "We will shake our hands after," and she stooped, took off the shackles, and freed his arms.

"Now if you like," she said, and they shook hands as McGilveray stood up and threw out his chest. But, try as he would to look important, she was still an inch taller than he.

A few moments later they were hurrying quietly through the woods, to the river. There was no speaking. There was only the escaping prisoner and the gay-hearted girl speeding along in the night, the mumbling of the quiet cascade in their ears, the shifting moon playing hide-and-seek with the clouds. They came out on the bank a distance above where McGilveray had landed, and the girl paused and spoke in a whisper. "It is more hard now," she said. "Here is a boat, and I must paddle--you would go to splash. Sit still and be good."

She loosed the boat into the current gently, and, holding it, motioned to him to enter.

"You're goin' to row me over?" he asked, incredulously.

"Sh! get in," she said.

"Shtrike me crazy, no!" said McGilveray. "Divil a step will I go. Let me that sowed the storm take the whirlwind." He threw out his chest.

"What is it you came here for?" she asked, with meaning.

"Yourself an' the mockin' bird in yer voice," he answered.

"Then that is enough," she said. "You come for me, I go for you. Get in."

A moment afterwards, taking advantage of the obscured moon, they were carried out on the current diagonally down the stream, and came quickly to that point on the shore where an English picket was placed. They had scarcely touched the shore when the click of a musket was heard, and a "Qui-va-la?" came from the thicket.

McGilveray gave the pass-word, and presently he was on the bank saluting the sentry he had left three hours before.

"Malbrouk s'en va t'en guerre!" said the girl again with a gay insolence, and pushed the boat out into the stream.

"A minnit, a minnit, me darlin'," said McGilveray.

"Keep your promise," came back, softly.

"Ah, come back wan minnit!"

"A flirt!" said the sentry.

"You will pay for that," said the girl to the sentry, with quick anger.

"Do you love me, Irishman?" she added, to McGilveray.

"I do--aw, wurra, wurra, I do!" said McGilveray. "Then you come and get me by ze front door of ze city," said she, and a couple of quick strokes sent her canoe out into the dusky middle of the stream; and she was soon lost to view.

"Aw, the loike o' that! Aw, the foine av her-the tip-top lass o' the wide world!" said he.

"You're a fool, an' there'll be trouble from this," said the sentry.

There was trouble, for two hours later the sentry was found dead; picked off by a bullet from the other shore when he showed himself in the moonlight; and from that hour all friendliness between the pickets of the English and the French ceased on the Montmorenci.

But the one witness to McGilveray's adventure was dead, and that was why no man knew wherefore it was that McGilveray took an oath to drink no more till they captured Quebec.

From May to September McGilveray kept to his resolution. But for all that time he never saw "the tip-top lass o' the wide world." A time came, however, when McGilveray's last state was worse than his first, and that was the evening before the day Quebec was taken. A dozen prisoners had been captured in a sortie from the Isle of Orleans to the mouth of the St. Charles River. Among these prisoners was the grinning corporal who had captured McGilveray and then released him.

Two strange things happened. The big, grinning corporal escaped from captivity the same night, and McGilveray, as a non-com said, "Got shameful drunk." This is one explanation of the two things. McGilveray had assisted the grinning corporal to escape. The other explanation belongs to the end of the story. In any case, McGilveray "got shameful drunk," and "was going large" through the camp. The end of it was his arrest for assisting a prisoner to escape and for being drunk and disorderly. The band of Anstruther's regiment boarded H.M.S. Leostaf

without him, to proceed up the river stealthily with the rest of the fleet to Cap Rouge, from whence the last great effort of the heroic Wolfe to effect a landing was to be made. McGilveray, still intoxicated but intelligent, watched them go in silence.

As General Wolfe was about to enter the boat which was to convey him to the flag-ship, he saw McGilveray, who was waiting under guard to be taken to Major Hardy's post at Point Levis. The General knew him well, and looked at him half sadly, half sternly.

"I knew you were free with drink, McGilveray," he said, "but I did not think you were a traitor to your country too."

McGilveray saluted, and did not answer.

"You might have waited till after to-morrow, man," said the General, his eyes flashing. "My soldiers should have good music to-morrow."

McGilveray saluted again, but made no answer.

As if with a sudden thought the General waved off the officers and men near him, and beckoned McGilveray to him.

"I can understand the drink in a bad soldier," he said, "but you helped a prisoner to escape. Come, man, we may both be dead to-morrow, and I'd like to feel that no soldier in my army is wilfully a foe of his country."

"He did the same for me, when I was taken prisoner, yer Excellency, an' --an', yer Excellency, 'twas a matter of a woman, too."

The General's face relaxed a little. "Tell me the whole truth," said he; and McGilveray told him all. "Ah, yer Excellency," he burst out, at last, "I was no traitor at heart, but a fool I always was! Yer Excellency, court-martial and death's no matter to me; but I'd like to play wan toon agin, to lead the byes tomorrow. Wan toon, Ginerel, an' I'll be dacintly shot before the day's over-ah, yer Excellency, wan toon more, and to be wid the byes followin' the Ginerel!"

The General's face relaxed still more.

"I take you at your word," said he. He gave orders that McGilveray should proceed at once aboard the flag-ship, from whence he should join Anstruther's regiment at Cap Rouge.

The General entered the boat, and McGilveray followed with some non-com. officers in another. It was now quite dark, and their motions, or the motions of the vessels of war, could not be seen from the French encampment or the citadel. They neared the flag-ship, and the General, followed by his officers, climbed up. Then the men in McGilveray's boat climbed up also, until only himself and another were left.

At that moment the General, looking down from the side of the ship, said

sharply to an officer beside him: "What's that?"

He pointed to a dark object floating near the ship, from which presently came a small light with a hissing sound.

"It's a fire-organ, sir," was the reply.

A fire-organ was a raft, carrying long tubes like the pipes of an organ, and filled with explosives. They were used by the French to send among the vessels of the British fleet to disorganise and destroy them. The little light which the General saw was the burning fuse. The raft had been brought out into the current by French sailors, the fuse had been lighted, and it was headed to drift towards the British ships. The fleet was now in motion, and apart from the havoc which the bursting fire-organ might make, the light from the explosion would reveal the fact that the English men-o'-war were now moving towards Cap Rouge. This knowledge would enable Montcalm to detect Wolfe's purpose, and he would at once move his army in that direction. The west side of the town had meagre military defenses, the great cliffs being thought impregnable. But at this point Wolfe had discovered a narrow path up a steep cliff.

McGilveray had seen the fire-organ at the same moment as the General. "Get up the side," he said to the remaining soldier in his boat. The soldier began climbing, and McGilveray caught the oars and was instantly away towards the raft. The General, looking over the ship's side, understood his daring purpose. In the shadow, they saw him near it, they saw him throw a boat-hook and catch it, and then attach a rope; they saw him sit down, and, taking the oars, laboriously row up-stream toward the opposite shore, the fuse burning softly, somewhere among the great pipes of explosives. McGilveray knew that it might be impossible to reach the fuse--there was no time to spare, and he had set about to row the devilish machine out of range of the vessels which were carrying Wolfe's army to a forlorn hope.

For minutes those on board the man-o'-war watched and listened. Presently nothing could be seen, not even the small glimmer from the burning fuse.

Then, all at once, there was a terrible report, and the organ pipes belched their hellish music upon the sea. Within the circle of light that the explosion made, there was no sign of any ship; but, strangely tall in the red glare, stood McGilveray in his boat. An instant he stood so, then he fell, and presently darkness covered the scene. The furious music of death and war was over. There was silence on the ship for a time as all watched and waited. Presently an officer said to the General: "I'm afraid he's gone, sir."

"Send a boat to search," was the reply. "If he is dead"--the General took off his hat "we will, please God, bury him within the French citadel to-morrow."

But McGilveray was alive, and in half-an-hour he was brought aboard the flag-ship, safe and sober. The General praised him for his courage, and

told him that the charge against him should be withdrawn.

"You've wiped all out, McGilveray," said Wolfe. "We see you are no traitor."

"Only a fool of a bandmaster who wanted wan toon more, yer Excillincy," said McGilveray.

"Beware drink, beware women," answered the General.

But advice of that sort is thrown away on such as McGilveray. The next evening after Quebec was taken, and McGilveray went in at the head of his men playing "The Men of Harlech," he met in the streets the woman that had nearly been the cause of his undoing. Indignation threw out his chest.

"It's you, thin," he said, and he tried to look scornfully at her.

"Have you keep your promise?" she said, hardly above her breath.

"What's that to you?" he asked, his eyes firing up. "I got drunk last night--after I set your husband free--after he tould me you was his wife. We're aven now, decaver! I saved him, and the divil give you joy of that salvation--and that husband, say I."

"Hoosban'--" she exclaimed, "who was my hoosban'?"

"The big grinning corporal," he answered.

"He is shot this morning," she said, her face darkening, "and, besides, he was--nevare--my hoosban'."

"He said he was," replied McGilveray, eagerly.

"He was awway a liar," she answered.

"He decaved you too, thin?" asked McGilveray, his face growing red.

She did not answer, but all at once a change came over her, the half-mocking smile left her lips, tears suddenly ran down her cheeks, and without a word she turned and hurried into a little alley, and was lost to view, leaving McGilveray amazed and confounded.

It was days before he found her again, and three things only that they said are of any moment here. "We'll lave the past behind us," he said--"an' the pit below for me, if I'm not a good husband t' ye!"

"You will not drink no more?" she asked, putting a hand on his shoulder.

"Not till the Frenchies take Quebec again," he answered.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

We'll lave the past behind us
The furious music of death and war was over

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