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M A R C O ;

—OR,—

THE FEMALE SMUGGLER:

A TALE OF

Strange Incidents Afloat and Ashore.

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B O S T O N :

1857.

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# THE FEMALE SMUGGLER.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE OLD FISHERMAN'S LOSS.

IN the year of our Lord 1824, France was in a state anything but agreeable to the mass of the people. Louis XVIII desired to do all in his power for the good of his subjects, but he was governed by the old monarchists, and through their urging he not only placed some of the most unjust restrictions upon the liberties of the people, but he lent himself towards carrying out a great many plans of revenge and injury which others had concocted. Many nobles were persecuted, executed, or driven from the country just to please others. Yet the country was in a measure quiet and peaceable, for since Napoleon had died, the lovers of that great conqueror had given up all hopes of carrying out their own plans of government, and Louis was well seated upon the throne, so far as earthly causes and effects operated. But many were the good men and women who were smarting under oppression, the most cruel and unjust.

It was a pleasant morning in spring. For some days the weather upon the English Channel had been unpleasant and rainy, but the clouds had now all passed off, and the sun came out once more bright and warm. Just outside of the harbor of St. Malo lay an English seventy-four gunship at single anchor. She had been upon the French coast for several days, and had anchored there on the morning of the previous day. She was a heavy, handsome ship, and her sails were now unfurled and exposed to the warm sunshine to dry, while the crew, inside and out, seemed busily engaged in cleaning up.

Upon a low, rocky piece of beach, close upon the western confine of the harbor, sat an old man, somewhere about three-score years of age, and his rough, coarse garb bespoke him to be a fisherman. The expression of his countenance was kind in the extreme, though now his face was worked upon by some mental agony. His name was Pierre Fretart, and for miles around he was known as one of the most honest and industrious men in the country. Not far from where he sat, just upon the smooth point at the entrance of the river Ille, stood the humble cot which served him as a home. It was in truth a homely dwelling, but its appearance was neat and tidy, and showed much more of taste in its little garden than did many of the more imposing dwellings in the distance.

Pierre Fretart sat there upon the bottom of the boat, and his gaze was turned upon the heavy ship-of-war that lay out in the bay at anchor. There had been tears upon his cheeks, for their tracks were yet traced

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among the weather-beaten furrows, in warm, moist lines. The old fisherman groaned in anguish, and his hands were clasped tightly together. So deeply was his attention fixed upon the ship that he did not notice the sound of footsteps that awoke the air near him, and it was not until a hand was laid upon his shoulders that he became aware of the presence of a second party. Pierre started to his feet, and he found himself face to face with a stranger; but yet he gazed most sharply into the newcomer's face, for there was something peculiar in the countenance.

The stranger was a person of medium height, considerably taller than the fisherman and of a most commanding appearance. His eyes were black and piercing; his hair long, jetty black and curling, and his face mostly covered with a very neatly trimmed black beard. His features were regular and finely chiselled, and his skin deeply bronzed by exposure. His frame was finely built and admirably proportioned, and if he could possibly lack in muscular strength, the lack was more than made up in quickness of movement and keenness of perception and judgment. His dress consisted of a dark blue frock of fine German cloth, trimmed with gold, and secured about the waist by a red sash. The trousers were of black velvet, laced at the sides, and gathered in at the bottom beneath the tops of his polished boots. Upon his head he wore blue velvet cap, ornamented with a golden tassel, and where his frock was open in front could be seen a frill of fine linen, and also the silver-garnished butt of a pistol.

The honest fisherman felt a kind of awe creeping over him as he came to realize the full force of the stranger's appearance, for he felt himself to be in the presence of some superior.

'This is Pierre Fretart, if I mistake not?' said the stranger, after he had allowed the fisherman a reasonable time in which to make his examination.

'Yes, sir,' returned Pierre, obsequiously.

'So I thought. I have been to your cot, but not finding you there, I came this way, and it seems I hit the right track. I want some assistance—or, I should say, I am likely to want some. You have a good, heavy boat?'

'Yes, sir.'

'She is a fair sea boat?'

'Yes sir.'

'Suppose there should be such a thing as my wanting to carry off a small cargo from the opposite shore a few nights hence, think you could help me?'

'That depends upon what it is,' returned the fisherman, after some hesitation.

'Never mind that,' quietly added the stranger, with a smile. 'You shall not suffer harm. You have a son, I believe?'

The old man started and turned pale; his lips quivered, and his eyes filled with tears. Slowly he raised his hand to his brow, and bent his head, for he knew that he was weeping, and he seemed to wish to hide his tears.

'Ha!' uttered the stranger, with sudden interest, 'have I touched a tender chord? Has harm befallen your boy?'

Pierre drew his rough sleeve across his eyes, and then gazed up into his interlocutor's face. He tried to speak several times before the words came forth, but at length he raised his trembling hand towards the English ship, and in a choking tone, he said—

'My boy is there—on board that ship, sir.'

'What! on board the Englishman?' uttered the stranger, in surprise.

'Yes, sir,' resumed Pierre, gaining more command over himself; 'he was carried on board last night.'

'But how? Why was he taken away? I do not understand it,' said the other, with interest.

'Last night, sir,' answered the fisherman, wiping the tears again from his face, 'while Henry and I were down here mending our nets, a boat from that ship came ashore, and an officer landed close by here. He came up to where I stood and asked my name and business, and when I told him he wanted to know who Henry was. I told him he was my son, and upon that he laughed in my face, and said he was a deserter from the English navy—that my boy, my Henry, was a deserter from the English! Then he called up some of his men from the boat, and they bound poor Henry's arms and carried him to the boat. But they had to work for it,' added the old man, while a momentary gleam of pride appeared in his eyes. 'By the holy saints! the boy laid six of them flat upon the sand before they got him bound.'

The stranger listened to the recital with deep interest, and when Pierre had finished he clutched his hands emphatically together, and gazed off upon the English ship. He remained thus for some moments, and when he turned again to the fisherman, his dark eyes were sparkling with more than common meaning.

'Pierre Fretart,' he said, 'I know the meaning of the Englishman well. Your son is not the first one who has been seized in the same manner upon our coast. Let the Briton find a young, stout seaman who can speak his language well, and he will impress him if possible. There have been more than an hundred of our poor fishermen taken in that way. Some two or three months since, there were about a dozen English men-of-war-men deserted at St. Malo, and ever since the English officers have been impressing seamen upon the strength of it.'

'Yes—I know,' said Pierre. 'Only one week ago, they took five men in one night from the western shore of Cancalle Bay. But what shall I do? How shall I live without my poor boy? He was all to me—so good, so kind, and so noble. O, I cannot live without him!'

'We must rescue him,' returned the stranger.

'We?' returned the fisherman, with inquisitive surprise. 'We rescue him?'

'Or I,' added the other.

'Do you mean that you can help my poor boy?'

'I mean that I will try. I love not those Englishmen, for they have long been enemies to me and mine, and if I can save your son, I will.'

The fisherman started forward and grasped the stranger by the hand, and the sudden beaming of his countenance showed how deep was the relief that had opened thus upon him.

'O,' he uttered, 'save him—save my boy! and the blessings of Heaven'

shall rest upon you. I will pray for you while God shall give me breath. Do you think you can save him?

'I can try—and I feel sure I shall succeed. At any rate, in twenty-four hours hence you shall know the result of my efforts.'

'So soon?' asked Pierre.

'Yes. Such work, if done at all, must be done at once. To-morrow morning you shall know whether your son is to be rescued or not. I know something of the intended movements of that ship, for I have had an interest in learning. She will not sail before to-morrow, if she does then.'

'And shall you want my assistance?'

'No. Not many can work to advantage in such a case. I will do it all alone.'

Pierre Fretart gazed into the speaker's face, and after some hesitation, he asked:

'Will you tell me, sir, to whom I am indebted for this kindness?'

'Have you never seen me before?' returned the stranger.

The old man looked sharply upon the features of his interlocutor, and a shade of doubt rested upon his countenance.

'I do not know you, sir,' he said; 'and yet it appears to me that I have seen you before. I may have met you.'

'Then you do not know me?'

'In truth, I do not, sir.'

'Have you ever chanced to hear of a certain individual, named Marco Montmorillon?'

'Montmorillon?' uttered the fisherman, starting in surprise. 'The great Smuggler of Malo?'

'It is he that I mean,' replied the stranger, with a quiet smile.

'Surely I have heard of him,' answered Pierre, regarding his companion with wonder and awe. 'Who is there on the French coast that has not heard of him? The man who has for years cruised between the two kingdoms in spite of all revenue law and officers. Everybody has heard of Montmorillon, sir.'

'So I suppose. But what should you think if I were to tell you that you now stood in the presence of the very man?'

'What—now?' In the presence of that smuggler? And is—are—are you Montmorillon?'

'By my word, I am, good Pierre. Now, do I look like a monster?—Do I look unlike other men? What think you?'

But Pierre Fretart knew not what to think. The idea that he now stood in the presence of a man whose fame as a smuggler had spread throughout two kingdoms, astounded him. The old man had heard all sorts of stories about the smuggler—stories that did not stick at trifles, nor hesitate at wonders. People had said that Montmorillon was in league with the very evil one himself; that he had the friendship and assistance of his satanic majesty at all times, and that in his own person he possessed the black art to its fullest extent. Such stories were not only common, but they were backed up by proof of the most plausible kind; for if such were not the case, then how could the bold smuggler pass through stone walls and iron doors, and even vanish bodily from human

sight? And that he had done all there were thousands ready to swear at any moment. Only about a month previous to this very time, he had been arrested by a squad of revenue officers, and confined in a room without windows, and at the single door of which three live sentinels were posted. Yet in the morning, Montmorillon was missing. Hundreds of times had he been followed until he was cornered in some place, where the officers were sure of taking him, and then, when that corner was searched, no such man could be found. All this was very strange, and as honest Pierre Fretart had heard it all over and over, of course, he considered himself in a very strange position. He looked upon the man before him, and while he looked he instinctively stepped back, and that, too, without answering his question.

'Come,' urged the smuggler, with a smile, 'what think you? Am I the monster in looks that I have been painted?'

'I never heard you called monster,' quickly returned Pierre. 'On the contrary, I have always heard you spoken very well of by those who knew you. I have heard the poor fishermen of St. Malo bless you an hundred times.'

'Ah,' muttered Montmorillon, while a gleam of pride shot athwart his features. 'But it is no wonder, for I have ever helped our poor countrymen whenever need and opportunity offered. But you have not yet told me what you think. Do I look like a villain of any kind?'

'You do not. It is surely truth, you do not.'

'Thank you, Pierre. I thank you, for I would have the good opinion of all my people. No, no,' the smuggler added, with a look and tone of deep feeling. 'I have never harmed man but once, and then I was forced to give battle to an English cruiser. If I've wronged anybody, it has been only the British government. I have made free with their interests, and I mean to do it still more. The Briton has ever been my own and my country's enemy. His iron heel has crushed our fair land an hundred times, and he has filched from us every penny he could lay his hands upon. But let that pass now. I have reasons for wishing your good opinion, for I may sometimes need your assistance, and you may sometimes need mine. I came to see your boy—and I will see him!'

'You will save him!' cried the old man, moving again towards the smuggler.

'If I can,' was Montmorillon's reply; and as he spoke he turned his gaze once more upon the war ship. 'I will see you to-morrow morning at this place, or at your dwelling.'

So saying, the bold man turned away from the spot and moved off. Old Pierre Fretart gazed after him with wondering looks, and the expression of his countenance plainly showed that he was still moved with awe. When the smuggler had passed from his sight, he looked once more upon the ship, and then he turned slowly towards his humble cot. When he reached the little dwelling, he sat down by his table; but he could not eat. The place seemed lonesome to him without his boy, and he could only sit there and ponder upon the wicked deed of force which had deprived him of his wonted companion. But he was not so utterly miserable now as he had been before, for the promise he had received

from the smuggler gave him strong hopes of seeing his noble boy once more.

After a while the old man swallowed a cup of wine, but without eating he went away towards the city. He was too lonesome to work, and he determined to seek the company of some of his old companions at St. Malo.

## CHAPTER II.

### A FRIEND IN NEED.

IT was evening at St. Malo. In a small drinking house near the water's edge sat Marco Montmorillon. He was dressed differently now from what he was in the morning, being habited in a garb of a common seaman. He sat at a table in a small room adjoining the tap-room, and with him was a man who wore the garb of a British man-of-war's man, and who did really belong on board the English ship that now lay outside the harbor. He wore a silver anchor surmounted by a crown upon the right sleeve of his jacket, which indicated him to be a petty officer of some kind. Montmorillon had picked him up in the street half an hour before, and had led him into the drinking house only for a social chat over a glass of grog—so he had professed. The Englishman was just such a man as the smuggler needed, and he had been selected from some fifty of his shipmates who were cruising about the city on liberty.—He was just about Montmorillon's size, and his heavy whiskers bore a very close resemblance to those of his companion.

'I declare, I must be off,' said the sailor, looking at the window, and seeing that the last streaks of daylight had disappeared.

'What's the hurry?' asked the smuggler, pouring out another glass of grog and shoving it over to his *vis-à-vis*.

'I must be on board by nine o'clock. You know our rules are strict. By the bumping bolus, I have no desire to get a taste of the cat.'

'Pooh, never fear that yet. Why, bless you, man, 'tish't eight o'clock yet,' said the smuggler, speaking English like a native. 'But if you are in a hurry, let's have one bottle of wine, and then we'll be off. By my faith, I like your company too well to part without one bottle, at least. The old curmudgeon has got some wine that'll make your mouth water with the memory of it for years. Push away the grog and keep it for ship board.'

As the smuggler thus spoke, he rang a little bell which stood by his side, and in a moment afterwards, the host made his appearance. Montmorillon ordered a bottle of old Malmsey Madeira wine, and though the English sailor showed by his nervous movements that he was anxious to be off, yet it seemed that the wine was too much of a temptation for him to resist. The grog, composed of old rum and brandy, which he had already drunk, had operated somewhat upon him, and hence his will was a little weakened.

'Shipmate, won't you set that can of grog upon the sideboard, and then hand me the corkscrew?' asked the smuggler.

The unsuspecting seaman arose from his seat to comply with the request, and as soon as his back was turned, Montmorillon emptied a tiny powder into his glass. It was only a moderate dose of morphine. The seaman returned, and the smuggler poured out the wine. It was drunk and pronounced excellent. At the second glass the Englishman's eyes began to sparkle and his tongue was thoroughly loosened. The generous wine operated quickly upon the top of the strong grog.

'By the way,' said Montmorillon, breaking in suddenly upon the recital of a wonderful exploit which the other professed to have once performed, 'have you heard anything about that notorious smuggler?'

'Eh?' uttered the sailor, with a drunken leer. 'You mean Montmorillon?'

'Yes.'

'To be sure I have heard of him, and you shall hear of him, too, before long. By the pipe of Moses, his race is just about run, let me tell you that.'

'Ah, how so?'

'Why, I'll just tell ye, but ye won't—just one more drop of that wine. By the piper of Howth, but it's capital. Ye won't tell of it—ye won't whisper it, 'cause it will get me into trouble.'

'Of course not. But go on. If you will only capture the smuggler, you—'

'We *will* capture him,' valiantly cried the Englishman, swinging his glass over his head. 'We can't help it.'

'I hope it is so; but will you tell me how you will do it?'

'Yes—but mind, ye won't whisper it.'

Montmorillon promised, and the other continued:

'Ye see we have proof that the smuggler is now in St. Malo, but ye see he will keep dark while our ship is here. Now when we go away we are going to leave a lieutenant and twenty men, dressed all as common citizens, and they'll watch for the slippery chap. Don't you see?'

'Yes, I understand,' said Montmorillon, with a smile. 'I understand. It's a capital idea.'

'Yes—'tis—cap-i-tal,' stammered the other, whose tongue was growing thick, and whose eyes were beginning to droop. 'It's a g-g-lorious idee, eh?'

'Yes. But there is one thing I forgot,' cried the smuggler, speaking quickly, and in apparent alarm. 'By the mass, I've forgotten the countersign!'

'Eh? The counter—eh?'

'The countersign,' repeated Marco, starting to his feet, and laying his hand upon his companion's shoulder. 'By Jupiter, we cannot get aboard the ship without it.'

The poor fellow was too far gone to know what he was about, or what sort of company he was in, and with a strong effort to keep his eyes open, he said:

'Why, don't 'member? you's got a drefful mem'ry—it's 'Wellington,' don't ye know, eh?'

'O, yes, to be sure it is. Now I wonder if the boat will come off after us?'



Why, no, you fool—there ain't no boat a coming off after dark.—Didn't the old luff tell us if we wanted to stay after dark, we must find our own boat, eh, you lubber?'

'So he did,' returned Marco; and as he spoke he gently eased the sailor's head down upon the table, and in a moment more he was snoring gloriously. The smuggler called the host in and pointed out the insensible man to him.

'You'll take good care of him, and lock this door so that no one shall see him. You understand?'

'Certainly,' replied the publican. 'But what do you mean to do?'

'Just help me a moment, and I'll tell you. Here—off with this fellow's jacket.'

The host helped remove the man-of-wars-man's jacket, and when it was clear, the smuggler removed his own garment and donned the jacket in its place. Then he put on the fellow's hat, and then turned towards the wondering host.

'There,' he said, with a light laugh, 'do I not look a little like that man? or, rather as he did look an hour ago?'

'Upon my soul, you do. But you are not going to venture on board that English line-of-battle ship?'

'I am, good Pedro.'

'But—'

'Never mind your *'buts'* now. I am going, and I must hurry, too, for nine o'clock was the hour set for the ship's men to be on board, and if I go later than that I shall be questioned. Keep this fellow safe, and I'll warrant you I'll return soon.'

Montmorillon stopped speaking and bowed his head a moment, and then he asked the host to bring him an orange. It was quickly produced, and having made a puncture in the skin, the smuggler introduced a considerable quantity of morphine into it, and with a long needle he stirred it up enough to thoroughly mix the potent narcotic with the fruit. This done he put the orange into his pocket, and then started off upon his self-imposed task.

It was now half-past eight, and the night was quite dark. There was no moon, and as the atmosphere was loaded with a dim, hazy mist, the glimmer of the stars was mostly shut out. Montmorillon walked quickly to the water, and at the end of a low pier he found a boat in waiting with two men in it. It was his own boat, and the present occupants were two of his faithful followers. He stepped at once on board, and ordered the men to push off, and as they rowed out from the harbor Montmorillon told them what he had done. They said not a word to deter him from his purpose, for they knew him well enough to know that he would not have undertaken the mission without having first seen the way clear, and also that if his mind was made up no power of persuasion would move him from his purpose.

'As soon as you have put me on board, I want you to row out ahead of the ship, and lay as close under the bows as you can without being detected, and there you must remain until you hear my voice. Mind, now, and lay directly under her fore-foot, let the distance be what it will.'

The men promised to obey, and not long afterwards the ship was reached. The boat was hailed by the sentinel at the larboard gangway, and the smuggler answered it. When the boat came alongside, Marco sprang upon the ladder and ascended.

'Who comes there?' asked the mariner, whose 'gang-board' was rigged upon the outside of the bulwarks.

'A friend,' boldly replied Marco.

'Give me the countersign.'

'Wellington!'

'All's well!' cried the sentry, and the smuggler passed over the side.

In the gangway he was met by the ship's corporal, but was subjected to no further examination.

'Is that you, Wickham?' asked the officer of the deck, who stood by the fire-rail.

'Yes, sir,' returned Marco, touching his hat, but keeping his face turned from the rays of the lantern that hung at the gangway.

No more questions were asked by the officer, and our adventurer turned at once towards the main hatchway. When he reached the gun-deck he found the hammocks 'slung' and most of the crew already 'turned in.' He crawled away beneath the hammocks, out of sight of the men who were assembled in the gangways, and moved cautiously towards the bows, where he knew the prisoners were always kept.

The ship's 'brig,' so called, which term is applied to any place where prisoners are kept on board a ship-of-war, was forward, on the starboard side of the main gun-deck, and occupied the spaces between three of the heavy guns. In the space between the two forward guns was Henry Fretart. He was, in truth, just such a man as a recruiting officer, or a press-gang, would select for their obtaining. He was about twenty-one years of age, tall, and finely built, with a frank, open countenance, and features of more than ordinary beauty. His eyes were large, and black as jet, and quick and brilliant. His hair was like the plumage of the raven in color, and clustered about his noble brow and temples in glossy ringlets. From his build one would at once see that he possessed a vast deal of muscular strength, and it would be no source of wonder that a comparatively large body of men should have much difficulty in capturing him alive. He was now habited in the garb of the English navy, having received his uniform immediately upon entering the ship.

Besides young Fretart there were some dozen others in the 'brig,' most of whom had been confined in punishment for drunkenness, but they were all of them either in their hammocks, or else asleep upon the deck.

The sentinel was pacing slowly to and fro upon his post with a drawn sword in his hand, and from the manner in which his gaze was fixed upon the young prisoner, it was easy to see that he had some special order with regard to that individual.

'Come, my solemn cove,' said the marine, stopping in his walk and looking at Fretart, 'aren't you going to turn in to-night?'

Henry looked up, but did not reply. He stood leaning against a gun with his arms folded across his breast, and his countenance was marked by deep anguish. He had been claimed as a British deserter, and he saw nothing in the future but an ignominious servitude. He was think-

ing of the quiet little home he had lost, and of the poor father he had left behind, when the sentinel spoke.

'Come, turn in, pursued the marine, in a surly tone. 'I'm tired of watchin' you. You had better be sleepin', for if we go to sea to-morrow, you'll be put on duty.'

'Not yet,' returned Henry. 'I'll turn in soon, but you needn't fear for me, so make yourself easy on that score.'

'O, you need watchin' bad enough,' resumed the sentry, in a tone which he meant to be sarcastic. 'What have you been eyein' that port so for, eh?'

He alluded to the bridle port which was open to allow a free circulation of air.

'If I have had my eyes upon that port, it was only while I was thinking of matters in which you have no part nor interest.'

'Halloo—let the poor fellow be in peace,' growled a grum voice from the other side of the after gun of the brig. 'He won't try to get away with those irons on his feet.'

'Eh? Is that you, Wickham?' asked the marine, as he saw a whiskered face dimly defined over the breech of the gun. (The disguised voice sounded something like Wickham's.

'Yes, 'tis me—just come off with a locker full of oranges,' returned the husky, grum voice.

'Eh? Oranges? Give us one. Come.'

An orange was extended over the gun, and the greedy marine made a grab for it, and as he found it securely in his possession a hurried 'thank-ee' dropped from his lips. He cast his eyes furtively about him to see that no officer was about, and then he went at the fruit, and in a marvellous short space of time he had devoured it.)

'Give us another,' he whispered, peering over the gun. But the donor of the devoured fruit was gone, and the sentry resumed his walk.

At the end of ten minutes the marine began to yawn, and his eyelids manifested a strong propensity to droop, but he put forth all his power to keep them up. Ere long his gaze became remarkably unsteady, and his steps were slower and more dubious. Just then the sergeant came along on his route, and the sleepy sentinel quickened his pace and lifted his head up with considerable energy.

'All safe?' inquired the officer.

'Right as a Bible,' responded the sentry.

The sergeant passed on, and in a few moments more the poor marine leaned against a gun. His power of locomotion had failed him, for his eyes would not keep open, and with a few more efforts to keep his gaze upon his prisoners, he bowed his head and sank gradually down. He lay with his body upon the deck, and his head upon one of the trunks of the gun. As soon as he had assumed this position the giver of the orange made his appearance. He stopped a single instant to see that the sentry was asleep, and then he passed in between the guns.

'—sh!' he uttered, laying his finger upon young Fretart's arm.—

'Make no noise. I have come to liberate you, and you'll show your sense by holding your tongue and using your limbs. My boat is ahead. You can swim?'

'Yes,' quickly replied Henry, hardly knowing what to make of this.

'Then hold still a moment, and I'll off with these irons.'

Montmorillon—for it was he—twisted the key of the hand-irons with the handle of his jack-knife, and having slipped these off, he easily slipped out the key of the feet-irons by means of the bar of those he had taken from the wrists. One look was given around to see that all was safe, and then the smuggler moved quickly to the open port followed by Henry.

'Follow me, and strike out straight ahead. Swim for your life, now.'

As Montmorillon thus spoke, he let himself quietly down into the water and struck out, and in a moment more Fretart had followed him. The young man acted more upon instinct than upon reason, for he had not the least idea of what it all meant. Only he knew that his situation could not well be changed for the worse, and there was a glimmer of hope that this was in reality meant for his escape.

The sentinel upon the bows heard the plashing in the water below him, and he cried out, but of course he got no answer from the two swimmers—they only struck out the stronger. Once Montmorillon turned his head, and he saw a lantern at the port through which he had made his escape, and he could hear voices in angry tones. The sentry at the bows discharged his musket, and the ball struck in the water ahead of the swimmers. The smuggler called out for his boat, and ere long it came up, and both he and Henry were helped on board.

By this time the escape of the impressed prisoner had become known to the officers of the ship, for lights were at the larboard gangway, and men were seen coming over.

'They are calling away a boat,' said the smuggler. 'You must take an oar, my boy, and we'll let 'em whistle for their new man. You need not fear, for we can shoot this little skiff along out of their way, let them do their best.'

Both Marco and Henry took oars, and ere long their light boat was far out of harm's way, though they could hear the quick, strong strokes of the war-ship's boat, and could hear, too, the hurried orders of the officer. Montmorillon directed his boat towards the mouth of the river, and having run up about half a mile he landed at a point where a squad of fishing boats were moored.

'Now come with me,' said the smuggler, as soon as they had landed. 'If the officer come on shore for you they will naturally go to your father's cot first, so you will not be safe there until you have the official protection of the city. Follow me, and you shall be safe.'

Even now Henry asked no questions, for all this had come so suddenly and so unexpectedly, that he had no mind but to keep in the path which his strange friend pointed out to him. Of course it now appeared plain to him that he was delivered from the clutches of the British, and with a thankful heart he followed on after his mysterious leader, feeling sure that he should soon arrive at a solution of the mystery.



## CHAPTER III.

## THE ROBBERS.

IT was just dusk on the evening during which occurred the events now recorded and a heavy travelling carriage was rolling along towards St. Malo, on the road from Rennes. The carriage bore the arms of a marquis of the old aristocracy upon its panels, and within it were seated two individuals. The eldest of the two was a noble-looking person, not far from fifty years of age, and rather slight and delicate in his build; yet there was nothing effeminate about him, but on the contrary he was very muscular, and showed a quickness of movement and perception which proved him a man of nerve and decision. His hair was just beginning to turn gray, and the pencil of old Time had commenced to draw the lines of age upon his brow. His dress was a plain citizen's suit of black velvet short clothes and coat, and light top boots, and the only ornament of station or nobility he wore was a small, golden cross of the order of St. John of Jerusalem, set with brilliants, suspended by a bit of scarlet ribbon, from his left breast. Such was Sir Philip de Montigny. He was a kind-hearted, benevolent man, and he possessed the warmest love and esteem of all the peasantry and people who lived within the circle of his influence. Yet he was an aristocrat, and upon the point of family and blood he hung with a most resolute tenacity.

The companion of the marquis was a young girl just bursting into the full beauty of womanhood. It was his daughter, and his only child—her name was Isidore. She had seen the warmth and chill of only eighteen years, but even that time had served to make her old in experience, for revolution had been the song and clang of her native land since the hour of her birth; and though her father had run clear of danger, yet she had seen others suffer. She was of a mild, beauteous countenance, but yet possessing more than an ordinary degree of vivacity and intelligence. Her hair was a very dark auburn, and her eyes a brilliant hazel. People who saw her every day, and knew her mind and her temper, said she was the most beautiful creature in the province; and though the sweetness of her disposition, and the loveliness of her character may have prejudiced them some in their estimate of her external beauty, yet she was really beautiful, though there might have been others who, at first sight, would have carried off the palm as models of perfected beauty. Isidore de Montigny would not have answered for the model of a sculptor, for her features were of no particular class, such as would look well in cold marble, but they were just fitted as the mirror of her own pure soul, and it required the life and being of herself to give beauty to the face.

The carriage of the marquis was upon the river road, following the circuitous bank of the Ille, and as the shades of night began to gather about the deep gorges through which the road and the river ran, our travellers found themselves yet some distance from their journey's end.

'How much farther have we to go?' asked Isidore, as she drew her head back into the carriage. She had been trying to recognize the place where they now were, but she could not.

'We have five leagues, at least,' returned the marquis. 'Don't you remember this place?'

'No,' said the girl, once more looking out.

'Don't you remember the adventure we had here two years ago, when a certain individual and his followers had saved our lives? It was very near this spot.'

'O, yes, yes,' cried Isidore. 'When our horses took fright, you mean, and came so near carrying us over the precipice?'

'Yes, my child; and a narrow escape it was, too,' added the marquis, with a perceptible shudder.

'I remember now,' mused the maiden. And the man who saved us was that terrible smuggler; Montmorillon, his name was?'

'You are right, Isidore, only I do not know that there is anything terrible about him. He is a smuggler, but he has only trampled upon the revenue laws of England.'

'He has been pronounced a criminal by our people, has he not? There has even been a price set upon his head by the officers of our province. Is it not so, father?'

'Yes, my child, that is true. There is a law of nations which makes it obligatory upon us to arrest such people.'

'And isn't it curious that they don't take him?'

'It is strange, indeed, Isidore, I cannot understand it; but of one thing we may be assured: The common people are all his friends, or he could not run clear as he does. I know of innumerable instances—or, at least, I have heard of them—in which he has helped the poor people upon our coast.'

'And perhaps you would shield him if he should seek your protection?' said Isidore.

'I might,' returned De Montigny; 'though I must confess I would rather he should not seek it.'

As the marquis gave this answer he put his head out of the coach window and ordered the postilion to hurry on as fast as possible. It was now very dark, and the road was for a distance of two leagues, or so, quite level. De Montigny drew his pistols from their case and laid them carefully upon the seat by his side, and then he ordered the postilion to have his own pistols so situated that he could get at them handily. Isidore watched these movements with nervous interest, and as soon as her father had given his orders to the driver, she said:

'I hope you do not fear any danger?'

'O, no,' returned the marquis; 'but then you know it is always well to be prepared.'

'Was there not a robbery somewhere about here, not long since?'

'Yes—on this very road. But that was a week ago, and the *gens d'armes* have been upon the robbers' track since, and they are probably in some other part of the kingdom now.'

But this assurance did not make Isidore easy. She had heard so much of the cruelties of the robbers that she shuddered and trembled whenever she thought of them, and at every noise from without, she would start and seize her father by the arm. At length the road became again abrupt and broken, and the horses were forced to go more slowly.

They had now reached to within two leagues of St. Malo, and within about a league of their own chateau. It was considerably past nine o'clock, and the atmosphere had become damp and cold. But the marquis and his daughter were wrapped snugly up in their thick, fur-trimmed cloaks, and the latter was almost asleep, when the carriage was stopped with a suddenness that came nigh throwing them from their seats. A pistol shot was heard, and on the next moment the hum of voices broke upon the night air. Isidore uttered a quick cry of alarm, and clung wildly to her father's arm, and in a moment afterwards they heard a sound as though the postilion was being pulled from his seat.

The marquis grasped his pistols and cocked them both, and hardly had he done so when the door of the carriage was thrown open, and the rays of a lantern flashed into the place.

'Be easy, monsieur,' said a voice, and as the words were spoken the muzzle of a pistol was thrust in upon them. 'We only want your watch and purse, so you will be wise not to put us to too much trouble. We are poor, and you are rich—so out of your bounty we want a mite. Come—don't—'

The villain's speech was cut short by the somewhat summary discharge of De Montigny's pistol, and the robber fell back without even a groan, for the ball had passed clean through his brain. In less than a respectable breathing time another man presented himself at the carriage door, while a second ran and picked up the lantern, the lamp of which was not extinguished. The marquis presented his second pistol, but the muzzle was quickly struck up, and its contents passed through the top of the carriage.

'Now, *mon ami*, you will give up, I know,' uttered the second ruffian, as he seized the marquis by both his wrists. He was a powerful fellow, and he quickly pulled the nobleman from his coach upon the ground. De Montigny had presence of mind enough to look about him, and by the light of the lantern he could see that there were four of the robbers left, and that his postilion was bound to a tree close by. As her father was pulled from the carriage Isidore uttered a long, wild cry, and as its sharp notes thrilled through the air one of the robbers sprang toward her.

'We'll stop your alarm, *ma'moiselle*,' he uttered, and he pulled her from her seat and lifted her upon the ground. She cried out loudly for help, but her mouth was soon stopped by a kerchief, and then the ruffian's eyes fell upon the rich, heavy chain that surrounded her neck.

'We'll take this to pay for our trouble in getting you quiet,' he said, as he took hold of it and drew out the richly jewelled watch that was attached to it.

The marquis struggled with all his might, but he could do nothing against his powerful adversary, and the villain was just commencing to search his pockets when he was startled by a quick cry from one of his companions. At that moment a pistol shot as heard, and the ruffian who was bending over the prostrate form of Isidore, uttered a sharp cry and sprang to his feet. A bullet had entered his side, and as he turned towards the point from whence the report had come and drew one of his own weapons, he received a blow upon the head that felled him to the earth.

'Fear not, *mademoiselle*,' said a calm, kind voice, at the same time Isidore felt herself lifted up, and she could just see that her preserver was a young man, but before she had opportunity for a more minute examination, was lifted quickly back into the carriage, and then her helper turned towards where the marquis lay. But the nobleman was upon his feet, a second man had come up, and the ruffian who had been engaged upon De Montigny's pockets, now lay weltering in his own blood. The other two ruffians, both of whom had been holding the horses, now sprang forward, but they were received by men who were ready for them. One of them fell before a well-aimed pistol, and the other escaping the shot that was meant for him, was felled by a blow upon the head with a heavy pistol-butt.

'Are you injured, *monsieur marquis*?' asked the elder of the two persons who had so opportunely made their appearance upon the spot.

'Not in the least,' returned De Montigny.

'And I believe they have not robbed me of anything.'

'Then we came in good season. And now if you will return to your carriage, I will go and let your postilion loose, for I see they have fixed him to a tree.'

Just then the robber who had been only knocked down sprang to his feet and darted across the road. He who had just turned to set the postilion at liberty saw the movement, and at once gave chase. The robber had sprang down the bank towards the river.

In the meantime the marquis turned towards his carriage, and the person who had rescued Isidore was just turning from it after having seen the maiden safe.

'Is my child hurt?' De Montigny uttered, with much concern.

'Not in the least,' returned the young man.

'No, father,' added Isidore, 'I am not even harmed.'

'Bless God and these young men for that,' ejaculated the marquis; and as he spoke the man who had given chase to robber returned.

'I had to give him up,' he said, breathing heavily after his exciting chase. 'The rascal took to the river, and I let him go. Now, *monsieur*, your carriage is yours once more, and I hope you will have better fortune during the rest of your jaunt. Jump in, and your postilion shall be ready for you in a moment.'

As the man spoke he turned towards the poor driver, who was yet trembling with fright, and with a few strokes of his sharp dagger set him at liberty.

'Stop, stop, good gentlemen,' cried the marquis, having now somewhat composed himself. 'You are not going off so. Who are you?'

'We are only men who chanced to find you in trouble, and who would have helped any honest man or woman in like circumstances, so you owe us no particular thanks.'

So I owe you much the more of thanks,' quickly returned De Montigny; 'for I can be more grateful to him who acts the friend upon principles of right, than to him who helps only his own particular choice or acquaintances. My chateau is only a short distance off—not quite a league. Go with me and pass the night, at any rate. Come—I shall take no refusal.'

The two strangers conversed in whispers for a moment, and then they consented to go with the marquis. Accordingly they entered the carriage, and in a few moments more the horses were again in motion.

'I will send men out in the morning,' said the marquis, 'and have the bodies of those villains taken care of. By the holy St. Michael,' he added, 'but your coming was most fortunate. I have heard of the doings of some of these robbers, and I know that they are a terrible set of reckless, bad men.'

'But they would not have killed you, father?' said Isidore, interrogatively.

'They might, but ah, my sweet child, that was not the worst I had to fear.'

'Not the worst, father?'

'No, Isidore, oh, heavens, no!'

'But what worse?'

'Do you not remember the robbery that was committed a month ago, when a maiden not much older than yourself was seized by these fiends?'

Isidore did remember it, and she uttered a deep groan as the recollection came to her mind, for the embrace of death would have been a joy when compared with the dreadful fate that dwelt now in her imagination.

'But I know not yet to whom I am indebted?' added the marquis, turning towards his vis-a-vis.

'Never mind,' returned the stranger, the outlines of whose form De Montigny could just distinguish against the light plush lining of the carriage. 'You shall see for yourself when we arrive at your chateau.'

'By the rood, but I know that voice,' uttered the nobleman.

'Then perhaps you will know the face when you see it,' said the stranger, in a laughing tone.

The marquis asked no more questions, but the conversation was kept up, and it turned upon the general subject of robbers and robberies.

Isidore felt lonesome in the chill darkness, and she opened a conversation with the man who sat opposite herself. At first she asked timid questions, but she found her companion spoke freely and pleasantly, and she at length conversed with freedom and ease. Of course she wondered what sort of a man she was holding converse with. That he was young, she was confident, not only from the tones of his voice, but from the glimpse she had had of his features by the light of the lantern while she was upon the ground. It was natural, under the circumstances, that she should be drawn towards him in gratitude at least, and she was really pleased to find that he was intelligent and kind. Perhaps she hoped he was as prepossessing in his external appearance as he had thus far proved himself in thought and disposition. But, be that as it might, the maiden felt a great curiosity to see his form and features plainly.

'Here we are,' cried the marquis, at length, as the carriage rolled up into a wide avenue, which was flanked by great trees.

And so they were—at length at the chateau. The carriage was stopped at the landing-steps of the great piazza, and the two strangers were the first to alight. The elder of the two assisted the marquis to alight, and the other gave his hand to Isidore. She looked hard upon him, but his back was to the light, and she could not see his face; so she passed

into the hall, and then the old man bade his friends follow him, and he led the way to one of the smaller sitting-rooms in which a fire was burning.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A CURIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

A LARGE hanging lamp was burning in the centre room to which the marquis had conducted his friends, and the fire upon the grate burned cheerfully, for the night was damp and chilly, and the servants knew that their master would expect it. As soon as De Montigny had thrown off his outer garments and handed them to the valet who stood ready to take them, he turned towards his preservers. He met the calm look of the elder of the two, and a slight start was perceptible in his manner, for those deep, black, brilliant eyes, and that glossy, well turned beard, were not to be mistaken.

'Montmorillon!' he uttered.

'Even so,' returned the smuggler, with a smile. 'Does the truth of my identity lessen your esteem or gratitude?'

'Not one whit, not one whit,' immediately replied the marquis, 'for truly I know of nothing very bad about you, while I do know of much that is very good. And your companion—who is he?'

'Did you ever see him before?' the smuggler asked.

'The face looks familiar,' uttered De Montigny, looking sharply into the young man's features. 'He is an English seaman, I take it?'

'Did he talk like an Englishman?'

'No, he did not.'

'Neither is he. You know good old Pierre Fretart?'

'Our old fisherman?'

'Yes.'

'To be sure. Ah, and now I recollect me. This is his son. I knew I had seen him somewhere, but the English garb deceived me.'

'It was a subject connected with that very garb that caused us to be where we were to-night,' said Montmorillon, 'and which also led me to accept your invitation. This youth has been impressed by the officers of the English ship, and early this evening I effected his escape. Now in all probability they will be after him in the morning, and it was to carry him to a place of safety that I was on my way when we met you. But if you will give him shelter here for awhile he will be perfectly secure.'

'Of course I will give him protection,' said the marquis, warmly; 'but yet I see not how they can take him. I know it is hard work for an Englishman to get clear of the clutches of the press-gang, but our young friend here has only to claim the protection of the city, and they cannot touch him.'

'I am aware of that, monsieur,' returned the smuggler, with just a perceptible show of hesitation; 'but I would rather not have the subject carried before the public now. He can just as well be protected here, and save all expense.'

'O, he shall have protection,' said De Montigny, looking into the handsome face of the youth. 'And then,' he continued, looking again towards the smuggler. 'But why should they have impressed him? They cannot surely be in such great want of men as to draw upon foreigners. Have you any idea?'

'Perhaps I have. But let that pass. He has been impressed, and I have rescued him, and now search will be made for him; and he may not be perfectly free from danger of arrest for several weeks, for some of the officers and crew of the Englishman are to be left on shore here for some time.'

'Ah, and what is that for?'

'It is out of an especial regard they have for your humble servant,' replied Montmorillon, with a smile.

'So, so,' uttered the marquis. 'I suppose they have some care for you yet?'

'O, yes, a good deal of it; but let them work for me as much as they please. They will find, if they could only analyze what they discover, that I have by far the most friends. Even in England,' continued Marco, in a tone of deep seriousness, 'I have more real friends than have the officers of government who are set to entrap me. While that government is grinding down the mass of the people by their enormous duties on the actual necessities of life, they must expect that the people will grasp at every opportunity to obtain their goods at moderate prices, and they must expect, also, that he who furnishes those goods at the risk of his own life, even, will receive the protection of those on whose backs their burden of taxation rests. But let that pass. I have long—for years—been engaged in this business, and though it has its unpleasant associations, yet I do not feel in my soul that I have been a guilty man before God. There is competition in everything; and in this case I am only a single man in competition with a nation. Every act of a smuggler's life has been to reduce the burden of the poor, and I am made happy by the knowledge that thousands have blessed me for saving them from penury and want. I know that government calls me a criminal, but I feel no compunctions in view of what I have done.'

'I must confess,' returned the marquis, thoughtfully, 'that you speak truly. I can judge somewhat by own feelings. Towards the thief or the petty robber my feelings naturally revolt, but it is not so with regard to those bold men, who, as you say, are in competition with a nation in furnishing the necessities of life at the cheapest rate. But you spoke of knowing why this youth was impressed?'

'Yes, but I could not now explain it. Let that pass now, if you please. You will give him a shelter here until he may be safe from the English officers. I will see your father in the morning, Henry, and will explain to him where you are, and he may come up here and see you.'

Ere long the servants had prepared a warm supper, and the men sat down to it. Henry Fretart looked in vain for the girl whom he had saved. He had hoped that he should see her, but she did not come. Shortly after the guests had moved back from the table, Montmorillon signified a desire to retire, and thereupon both he and Henry were conducted to chambers which had been prepared for them, each having a separate room, though adjoining each other.

Henry Fretart did not immediately retire. His mind was moved too much by new, strange thoughts to seek yet the oblivion of sleep. The voice of the female he had saved from the robber's grasp still rang in his ears, and from that voice he had pictured a face to suit his own fancy. He had caught just a glimpse of her features when helping her into the carriage, but it was not enough to reveal her face, though he felt warranted thereupon to fancy a very beautiful countenance.

But this was not the chief thing in the youth's mind. The thing that dwelt uppermost in his thoughts was the circumstance of his meeting with the smuggler, and the remarks which he had heard dropped since. All that he had absolutely learned was, that Montmorillon had seen his father and promised to rescue him from his durance, and the only reason he had given for running the risk was, his desire to do a good turn for a fellow in need, and at the same time to thwart the English, against whom, as a government, he had a strong antipathy. But Henry had reason to believe that there was something beyond and beneath all this which he did not see. He felt sure, from the smuggler's manner, that he had some motive beyond what he had confessed. His remark in the presence of the marquis, only a few minutes before, concerning his fear that by applying to the officials of St. Malo for protection the affair would be made more public than he desired. What did this mean? Montmorillon had said that he *did not want the affair carried before the public now!*

'Why not?' murmured the youth to himself, as he paced up and down the apartment. 'What has the smuggler to do with me? Why should he take such an interest in me and mine? By my soul, there is something beneath all this. The very appearance of that man—'

He stopped, for at that moment the door of his apartment opened, and the subject of his thoughts entered.

'So you are yet up as well as myself?' said the smuggler, as he closed the door after him.

Henry did not answer, for his mind was full of other thoughts. Yet he gazed hard into smuggler's face, and his own features showed that he was much moved.

'I thought I would seek you to-night,' continued Montmorillon, not seeming to notice that he had received no answer to his former remark, 'because I may not see you in the morning, for I must be off early. You had better remain here for a week, at least, for, as I remarked below, some of the ship's crew are to remain behind to entrap me, and if they come across you they may take you, too. I know the marquis will be kind to you, in consideration of the service we have rendered him, if for nothing else. So you will remain here, in due time you may go about your business again.'

'But why not appeal to the authorities at once?' asked Henry, with some warmth. 'I do not fancy this dodging a foe when I have the right to a national protection. The Englishman cannot take me—he dares not do it.'

'But you see he *has* done it,' laconically remarked the smuggler.

'I know he has done it once; but he dares not do it again. He took me then at a disadvantage. I will have protection another time.'

'What protection?'

'The protection of a Frenchman,' proudly returned the youth. 'By my soul, I am not to be driven from hole to corner for fear of men who have right whatever over me. I appreciate your kind efforts in my behalf, but I have yet some feelings of the man in me. I will go and claim the right that is mine, and then if a foreign power places a hand upon me, they will do it at their peril. I thank you, monsieur, but to-morrow morning I will go to St. Malo and lay the case before the governor, if he is there and if he is not there, to some one who is empowered, *ex officio*, to act in the premises.'

The youth looked noble as he spoke thus, and the smuggler regarded him with a beaming look.

'I know how you feel,' Marco at length said; 'but you don't know so much about it as I do. You have more to contend against than you are aware of. Let me advise you to remain where you are, at least till you hear from me again.'

'And why till I hear from you?' asked Henry, with a peculiar emphasis.

'Because I have taken a deep interest in your welfare.'

'But that is not enough. I would know more.'

'That is not the part of wisdom, my son, calmly and kindly replied the smuggler. 'You should not question too closely one who would do all in his power for your good. There may be things which it would not be expedient, nor safe, now to reveal, and if you are wise you will listen to me, and not question my honesty, nor my motives.'

'I do not question your honesty, sir,—God knows I do not. All I question is the propriety of my remaining here like a prisoner, when it is my born right to be in the enjoyment of the fullest liberty.'

A moment Montmorillon remained in silence, and his eyes were bent upon the floor. At length he said, in as kind and persuasive a tone as he could command:

'Henry, you will remain here. You will remain here until I bid you go. Promise me this?'

The youth was much moved by the smuggler's tone and manner. It was so kind, so gentle, so affectionate, and so parental in its air and substance. But he still rebelled.

'No, no,' he said, after a few moments' hesitation. 'I would do anything to please you—anything that would not conflict with my own ideas of true manly independence. I must not remain here like a criminal.'

'Henry Fretart,' responded Marco, with unusual solemnity, 'you will force me to say more than I had meant to speak at present. But if you will persist in throwing yourself upon your natural born rights, I am constrained to inform you that you will find it difficult to prove what you expect.'

'How! What?' exclaimed the youth, starting. 'Difficult to prove that I am entitled to the protection of the nation.'

'What mean you?'

'You never swore allegiance to this nation or its government.'

'And why should I? Am I not to the country born? My father's word is proof enough.'

'So it would be, did your father live?'

The youth started and fixed his eyes keenly upon the smuggler. He did not look like one who had been told a thing of which he never before thought, or even dreamed, but he rather looked like one who had just caught the first glimmer of a fact he had long dwelt upon as possible. He moved slowly towards his companion and placed his hand upon his arm.

'Marco Montmorillon,' he said, in a low, decided tone, 'tell me what you mean by your words?'

'You know what they mean,' returned the smuggler, 'and you must not question me farther. You have an enemy, or enemies, I am sure, and if I could lay my finger upon them now I would do so, but I cannot. Yet I mean to find them out. Now you had better remain here, for should you claim the protection of which you speak, you might, it is true, gain it without difficulty, but the probability is, that you would be put to your proof, and neither you nor old Pierre Fretart can tell where you were born, nor who your parents were.'

'And can you? can you tell me who my parents were?' cried Henry, with increasing eagerness.

'That is not the question to be settled first,' replied Montmorillon. 'The first question is—will the proof of your parentage either help you, or be safely developed?—Let that be settled first. I will do it.'

'But you will not leave me thus?'

'No—I wish not to leave you until you are willing to remain here, and I think that you will do so now. You have forced me to say thus much, but I cannot say more.'

'But my father—you will tell me if you know of him?'

'Only that he is dead. He died when you were between two and three years old. Now remain here until I see you again.'

As the smuggler spoke, he turned and left the apartment, and Henry made no movement to stop him. As soon as the strange man was gone, the youth sat down upon the edge of the bed and bowed his head. What he had just heard was not altogether new to him. He had long mistrusted that the old fisherman was not his father. This he had taken from some words which Pierre had accidentally dropped, and then the suspicion had been strengthened by his own inborn feelings and aspirations. And then what of the smuggler? Who was he, and what connection had he with the youth?

Henry undressed himself and went to bed, and his mind was full of vague and conflicting ideas, even after he had fallen asleep. He dreamed of the ship, of the press gang, of the smuggler, and of the maiden whom he had saved from the robbers. Then he woke and thought these things all over again, but the thing that dwelt with the most force upon his mind was the person of Marco Montmorillon, and the more he thought of him, the more food for wonder and curiosity did he find.



## CHAPTER V.

## AN ENEMY IN THE DARK.

NOT far from the estate of the Marquis de Montigny was the large and magnificent chateau of Count Arnaud Montfere. The former estate was upon the river Ille, while that of Montfere was to the eastward, and through the grounds ran a considerable stream which emptied into the Ille nearly opposite to the city of Dinan. Montfere was called the richest man in the province of Ille-et-Villaine, and surely his estate was one of the most desirable, his chateau one of the most grand, and his grounds the most beautifully laid out and the most productive. And yet Arnaud Montfere was one of the most grasping and avaricious men in the kingdom. He was a stout man, somewhat tending to corpulency, and showing in his every look and movement the result of his besetting vice. His hair was of a lightish brown—almost red in its hue—and his eyes were a deep gray. His complexion was verging upon the sandy cast, though a close observer would have seen that not only the color, but the rotundity, of his face was the result of a bloat. He was fond of wine, and an inordinate quantity of it generally found consumption at his hands.

It was early on the morning succeeding the events just recorded that the Count Montfere mounted his horse and took the road towards St. Malo. He was gaudily dressed, wearing every ornament and gew-gaw that could be placed with any degree of right upon his person. It was not yet fairly daylight when he started, and he rode as one who had business of importance to transact. The late rains had made the roads bad, and the count was forced to ride very slowly in order to keep his garments clear of the thick mud. The distance to St. Malo was near four leagues, and Montfere did not reach the city until eight o'clock. He then proceeded at once to a large cafe near the theatre, and there he found an officer from the English ship, who had apparently been waiting for him.

'Ah, sir count, you are late,' said the latter, as he took the noble's hand, and speaking in good French.

'No wonder I'm late. The roads were never worse since they were made. I could not hurry, Tollings.'

'Well, never mind,' said he who had been called Tollings. 'You are in time enough.'

'Here—let's step into this recess and have a bowl of hot punch, and there we can talk.'

'You can have the punch if you like,' returned the Englishman, 'but I never allow myself to drink so early in the day.'

'Pooh,' uttered the count, with a slight show of contempt, 'the cheering beverage is good at all times. Give me punch, or give me wine, or, what is sometimes better than either, the pure old *eau de vie*, at all times of day.'

The punch was called for, and the two men retired to one of the many recesses, and dropped the curtain.

'Now,' said the count, after he had drank a good share of the smoking punch, 'how fares your young seaman?'

'He's gone, sir count.'

'Gone?' uttered Montfere, setting down the silver cup from which he had been drinking and starting as though he had been struck. 'Gone, did you say?'

'Yes.'

'But you promised you would keep him. You said that if the proof could be made by me that he was the son of an English sailor, you would make him fast. Now I can prove that he was not only the son of an English man-of-wars-man, but that his father gave him up to the English naval service when he died.'

'Perhaps you can, sir count,' calmly returned the other, 'but that don't matter now. He made his escape last night. So you see your burden of proof don't help the matter any.'

'Escaped, did he? Then we'll find him.'

'But I should advise you to be very careful how you work, for if the youngster should claim the protection of the French government you might find it hard work to get him off again.'

'I know all that,' returned Montfere hastily, 'but I should not stop for trifles. I knew you wanted men, and I knew this young Fretart would be a good one for you, and so I pointed him out to you. If you have lost him, then you have lost one whom it would have been much easier to keep than to get again.'

'Never mind, *mon cher*, we can make his place good.'

'But that is not the thing, my brave lieutenant. I wanted you to have him, for, as I told you at the time, I wanted him out of the way. Of course we are too old in friendship for you to question me.'

'O, you need not fear that. It is enough for me that the youngster is a stout one, speaks English well, and can be claimed as an Englishman. It is part of my business to ship good men when I can. If you will contrive to return this fellow to the ship I will warrant you we'll keep him, and if I come across him I'll take him if I can. But you must see that the thing will be difficult, for I do not suppose you wish to show your hand in the business directly?'

'No, no, of course not,' returned the count. 'But how did he escape?'

'It must have been by some deeply laid plot—I will taste of that punch—some well digested plan. A man came on board the ship last night and answered to the name of Wickham, one of our old quarter-gunnery; but this morning we found that Wickham had not been aboard. He was found at old Pedro's tap-room down by the water, and he had certainly been drugged. The fellow who came on board and answered to his name also drugged the marine who stood sentry over the prisoner, and then both he and the prisoner made their escape through an open port. We gave them chase, but in the darkness we lost them.'

'Well, it's a curious piece of business, to say the least,' uttered the count, with an oath; 'and on the whole you may let the youngster go. You had better not think of getting him on board your ship again. It was a wild plan in the first place, and it has turned out about as well as could have been expected. Let the fellow go.'



'Then you have no real fears of him?'

'Fears?' repeated Montfere, looking up quickly. 'O, no, no. The whole truth is—and I suppose I might have told you in the first place—the youngster is a most systematic gambler, and he has almost ruined one of my intimate friends. Not far from own chateau lives a young man in whose affairs I feel a most lively interest, and by some means he met this Henry Fretart at the gaming table. He not only lost all his ready cash, but he actually made out a conveyance of more than half his real estate, and this, too, Fretart won from him. My friend has a young wife, and if he has to pay this it will utterly ruin him. It was to save him that I meant to have got the rascal out of the way.'

'It was kind of you, at all events,' said Tollings.

'I can be kind to my friends,' returned the count, with a show of magnanimity.

'Then it's all sham about his being English born?'

'O, no. He is that truly; and it was that fact that led me to seek your assistance in the matter. But I will contrive some other means, if possible, to get that deed from him, for I will save my friend from ruin, even though the effort should work to my own injury.'

Now whether the Englishman believed all this or not is more than can be with safety said. He knew, or ought to have known, Arnaud Montfere well enough to be led to doubt it. Himself and Montfere had first met when mere boys, at school in Frankfort-on-the-Oder, and since that time they had often been together, though of late years they had only casually met, Tollings's profession keeping him pretty steadily engaged. Yet perhaps Tollings did not know the whole of Montfere's character, but the count knew his well enough not to be afraid to trust him to a considerable extent.

'Can you not contrive to get that deed away from that fellow?' the lieutenant at length asked. 'I know he must be a witty fellow, for his looks show it, but I must confess that he does not look like a very bad man.'

'Looks are often deceitful,' was the count's reply. 'But I will have the deed at some rate.'

'Then you will not have him impressed again?'

'No—I guess not. Let him rest for the present, and I will watch him.'

Shortly afterwards the two men left the cafe and started down towards the water, and as the subject of Fretart's escape had been fully discussed, Tollings understood that he was to give the matter up so far as any work for his friend the count was concerned.

Poor Henry—he had now a new crime laid to his charge, but it could not matter much, for none who knew him were likely to hear it repeated. In truth, Henry Fretart never saw the inside of a gaming saloon, and had the count been pressed to produce his 'friend' who had come so nigh being ruined, he would have had to lug him up from the miry depths of his own mind, for he never had an existence anywhere else.

It was past noon when Arnaud Montfere set out on his return home, and he had heard the intelligence that Henry Fretart was not at his father's, and that he had not been seen about the city. He talked with himself as

he rode along, and we may find out something of his mind by listening to him for a moment.

'I was a fool to think of having the fellow impressed on board that ship,' he muttered; 'for, even had they got him off, he would of course have found his way back here at some future time if he had lived. But there's no harm done. Tollings don't suspect more than I told him, and no one else knows any thing about it. On the whole, I'm glad the thing didn't work, for now I'll make more sure game of him. I know him, and he must—walk. He isn't needed here at all.'

And thus the count rode on, and as he rode he continued to talk of the youth, and of vague plans in connection with him. One enemy, at least, on earth, Henry Fretart had; but why he should have had such an enemy was a thing he could not have guessed had he known the first fact.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A REVELATION.

**W**HEN Henry Fretart arose the next morning he found that Montmorillon had really gone. He met the marquis in the hall, and the old nobleman greeted him kindly.

'Your companion is off,' de Montigny said, with a smile.

'Did he leave any word for me?' asked the youth.

'Not exactly. He made me promise that would give you a home here until he came again, and of course I gave the promise with pleasure. You read, I presume?'

'I am fond of reading, sir.'

'Then I think you may pass your time very pleasantly. I have a large library, and while you are here it is at your service. You shall not find me lacking in gratitude.'

Henry expressed his thanks very warmly, and shortly afterwards he was informed that breakfast was ready. He went out into the breakfast room and found that he was to eat with the valet and postman and other attendants of that stamp, but of this, of course, he thought nothing, save to relish the rich food that was set before him. He learned from the valet that there were three tables set at the chateau. First the marquis and his daughter took breakfast alone; then the personal attendants ate in the dining room when there was no company; and lastly come the cook, scullion, gardener, grooms, and those whose occupations brought them in contact with the dirt—they ate in the kitchen. Not yet had Henry seen the maiden, and his curiosity was waxing strong on that point.

Shortly after breakfast our hero was informed that some one wished see him in the hall. He went down and found his old father there.—Pierre Fretart had been a father to him, and the youth could not but look upon him in that light, let the relationship of blood turn out as it might. The honest old fisherman was almost frantic with delight at seeing the noble boy once more safe, and as soon as the first transports of his

joy were passed he informed Henry that the smuggler had been at the cot before the day had fairly dawned.

'He told me, continued Pierre, 'that I had better bring you up some of your own clothes, and so I have done so, and more, too. I supposed you might find some pleasure in your toys, and I fetched them also. I borrowed old Gaspard's horse, and so they all come easy.'

Henry followed the old man out into the yard, and there, sure enough, he found everything he could have desired. Pierre had not only brought the best part of his wardrobe, but also his little oaken *escritoire* and his portfolio, and with this last acquisition was the youth particularly delighted, for it contained all the materials for drawing, a good assortment of crayons, and some water colors. Some years before Henry had gained an opportunity to learn to draw of an old artist who had hired him to row him up and down the river while he took sketches of the various points of scenic interest. This old fellow was a penurious individual, and Henry was, at that time, the only one he could find willing to wait upon him and take his pay in lessons in the art. But our hero had jumped at the chance with avidity, and he had followed up the study since, for he had a long cherished, secret ambition to raise himself above the level of his companions, and he saw in that art the sure means of doing it. Already had he sold some of his little sketches for fair remuneration, and thus he had been enabled to furnish himself with materials to pursue the study, and to procure clothing somewhat better than he could otherwise have afforded. He was perfectly willing that his father should call them 'playthings' and 'toys,' and he humored the conceit, too, for he meant to place the good old man in a position above hard work at some future day, and he wished the act should come as a sort of surprise.

Pierre helped Harry carry the things up to the snug little room which had been appropriated to his use, and after this had been accomplished our hero's next movement was to get off the hated English garb he then wore, and in its place to don one of his own suits. When this was done the youth really looked like another person, for his own garb was made to fit closely to his finely proportioned figure, and it gave him more of the true beauty that was rightfully his own. It was a suit of fine cloth, with a frock, or blouse of purple velvet, and a cap of the same ornamented with a golden tassel.

After this was done, and minor matters had been discussed, Henry came upon the subject that lay at that time nearest to his heart.

'Pierre,' he said, taking a seat near the old man, 'I have a question of importance to ask you, and I hope you will answer me truly and promptly.'

'Did you ever know me to answer you in any other way, my son?' returned the fisherman earnestly.

'Of course not. But I will come to the matter at once. Of course you know I am not your child?'

'Not my child!' uttered the old man, starting with surprise. 'Who told you that, my son?'

'I have long suspected it, father, and last night Marco Montmorillon assured me that it was so. How is it?'

'That smuggler is a strange man,' said Pierre, speaking half to himself, but still gazing into the youth's face.

'Never mind him now,' urged Henry. 'I want to hear about this. I am not your own son?'

It seemed hard work for the old man to speak, but at length he said:

'Well, my boy, you are not of my blood; but I hope you will not leave me. O, I've loved you, Henry, as though you had been my own, for Heaven never gave me a child of my own blood. You will not turn from me now?'

'No, no, my more than father. Let what may come to be my fate, and nothing shall separate us now. But tell me more—tell me all—all that you know?'

'I will, my boy—and I would have done it long ago if I had thought the knowledge could have benefited you; but I feared it would only serve to make you uneasy, and I kept it to myself. That smuggler is a very curious man—a very curious man. There is something about him I cannot understand.'

'Never mind him now,' interrupted the youth, somewhat impatiently. 'It is of my birth I would know.'

'Yes—certainly. And I will tell you.'

The old man bowed his head a moment in thought, and then he resumed:

'It is now over eighteen years ago—it will be nineteen come next November—for it was in November I saw you first. I remember the month and the year well, for it was on the same month that our great Napoleon took the proud city of Vienna and fought the great battle of Austerlitz. It was a cold, blustering night, and my wife—she was living then—and myself sat by our fire, where you have sat a thousand times since. It was near nine o'clock when we heard a low rap upon our door, and when I opened it a woman came in, and in her arms she carried a child. She sat down to warm her, and we gave her some supper, and when the child was placed upon the floor—it was a boy—he looked around till he saw me, and then he ran up to me and clambered into my lap, all the time crying out to me as though I was his father. The poor woman cried at this, and told us that the child's father was dead—that he was a soldier in Napoleon's army, and had been slain. We tried to comfort her all we could, and she staid with us all night. In the morning she wanted us to take care of the child until she came back from Rennes, where she was going to see the governor. Of course we did so. She came back in a week and staid with us three days. We had learned to love the child then just as though it had been our own, for he was a lovely little fellow, and took to us wonderfully. When the poor woman went away next she asked me if we wouldn't take the little boy and take care of him as though he was our own; and we promised to do so with all the pleasure in the world. The poor woman would not stay with us, though we asked her many times. She went away, and we did not see her again until spring. Then she came and stopped a week. Then she came again in the summer, and in the fall, and from that time I have not seen her, nor have I heard from her, though I have inquired often.'

'And am I that boy?' murmured Henry, in a choking whisper.

'Yes, you are the boy, and I can lay my hand upon my heart and tell God that I have kept my promise that I made your mother.'

'Then you think that woman was really my mother?'

'I know she was. O, it makes me cry now to think how she did use to weep over you when she came to see you. She would clasp you in her arms—cry over you—lay you on the floor, and then get down on her knees and pray for you, and then she would wipe her eyes and make me promise over again to be as kind to you as though you were my own.'

The youth's eyes were filled with tears, and for some moments he could not speak; but at length he said:

'It must have been my mother, for I have often had that picture before my mind. I knew not whether it was a dream, or whether it was some real episode of my life; but I see it now. I have seen that face in my dreams, just as plainly as though it were present with me in the flesh—what think you has become of her now?'

'I cannot tell, Henry. Of that you can judge as well as I.'

'Do you think she is dead?'

'I fear she must be. Only think—for seventeen years she has not been here. If she were alive, of course she would not have let such time pass without seeing her child.'

'I should think not, of course,' returned the youth, in a thoughtful, melancholy mood. 'I fear she is really on earth no more. But you spoke of the smuggler—as though there was something curious about him. What is it?'

'Ah, there you have me on the hip. I can't think anything, only that there is something very strange about him.'

'It cannot be that—pooh—no—of course not. No, no.'

'What were you going to say?'

'You will think me foolish, perhaps; but I was going to say that it could not be that he was—was my—father?'

'O—why, no,' uttered the old man, venemently. 'That's impossible. In the first place, your mother attended the funeral of our father. He was wounded, and came home to die. In the second place, Monmorillon is not old enough to be your father.'

'That's true,' added Henry.

'And next,' resumed the old man, 'the smuggler knew your father well, and was with him when he died.'

'But you know his name—you know my family name, Pierre?'

'No. Your mother told me to call you after my own name. I know no more.'

After this the conversation turned upon the smuggler, but they arrived at no other conclusion than that the subject of their remarks was a very strange man. This was the most they could make out.

Pierre remained at the chateau until the middle of the forenoon, and then he took his leave; but before he went he made Henry promise again that he would never leave the poor old man who had been so long a true father to him. The youth gave the promise with tears in his eyes, and if he had not spoken at all, his manner would have assured the anxious old fisherman that his utmost desires would be fulfilled so far as the lasting love of his adopted child was concerned.

When Henry returned to his room after having seen his old protector off, he had plenty to think and ponder upon, and it was not until the bell summoned him to dinner that he was aroused from his reverie.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE TUTOR.

It was towards the close of the day that Henry Fretart met the marquis in the hall. It was the first time they had met since morning, and at first de Montigny started, for he thought he had met a stranger.

'Upon my faith,' he said, as soon as he recognized his guest, 'your change of dress is to your advantage. You are wonderfully improved, and this meeting is most opportune, for my daughter wishes very much to see you—she has sent for you, as she has a curiosity, I suppose, to look upon the man who served her so good a turn.'

As the marquis spoke he turned towards the stairs and beckoned the youth to follow him, which he did without speaking, for his mind was in a state of rebellious confusion. The wish of his soul was about to be gratified, and on the way up the stairs he pondered upon the circumstance. He tried to analyze his feelings and learn if he, too, was moved alone by curiosity. The marquis had said his child had a curiosity to see her preserver. But his meditations were cut short by arriving at the door of her room. The marquis entered first, and when our hero had followed him he found himself in a sumptuously furnished room, the deep windows of which were hung with crimson drapery. Near one of those windows sat Isidore de Montigny. She arose as her visitors entered, and upon her father's introducing Henry, she smiled one of the sweetest smiles in the world, and put forth her hand frankly.

The youth felt the small, warm hand rest for a moment in his own, and he thought he never before had felt a hand half so soft or so powerful in its electric properties. He had felt some fear that he should see a proud, haughty beauty, in spite of the dreams he had to the contrary. But he found no such thing. He found a beauty to be sure, but she was a calm, warm beauty, and her whole form and feature bespoke her a generous, noble-hearted girl. The sun was just upon the point of setting, and as its rays poured like a flood of liquid gold into the room, they rested upon the face of Isidore and gave additional warmth to the smile that dwelt upon her features. She was so affable, so easy, so kind, and moreover so joyed to see her noble protector, that Henry soon felt himself at ease in her presence, and at a request from the marquis he took a seat.

Now in all probability Philip de Montigny only saw in the youth a poor fisher's son, who had done a kind act, and was therefore entitled to more of esteem than others of his class. He had been very particular to urge it upon his child that she should meet the youth kindly, and treat

him with that consideration which his services merited, and he was now highly gratified to see that she obeyed him.

Isidore did treat Henry Fretart kindly, and her every look and movement might have betrayed to a keen observer that she was agreeably disappointed in his appearance. She had pictured to herself a green, uncouth, overgrown youth, for she had noticed his size before; but she did not conceal the agreeable sensation his noble, manly appearance had produced upon her. She found him in truth a handsome youth, and had her father recollected the half he had heard her say about the opposite sex, he would have known that Henry Fretart must have been her perfect *beau ideal* of a man, for he not only possessed all those physical qualities upon which woman depends for protection and support, but he also possessed that beauty which charms the eyes and helps much to strengthen the love and quicken the esteem. And then as for the mind, she had seen that on the previous evening while they were riding home.

Our hero spent an hour in Isidore's company, and even the marquis, who engaged deeply in the conversation, seemed surprised at the general information which his young guest evinced, and he asked how one in a position so unfavorable could have managed to gain so much information.

'Ah,' replied Henry, while a beam of pride lighted up his features, 'it is not those whose circumstances are the most favorable that always make the best of their time. Is it not true that all of our strongest minds are those which have had the most rugged path to climb? And is it not also true that this very labor of climbing up the hill of adversity strengthens the mind, and gives a more keen appetite for knowledge—more power for digesting information, if I may so speak?'

The marquis admitted that such was the case, and Henry continued:

'But all has not been adverse to me. I have had many advantages, and I have improved them. Three years ago I was employed by the authorities of St. Malo to make drafts of a lot of buildings which they have since put up, and they were so pleased at my poor efforts that they gave me access to their libraries, and I have availed myself of this privilege without stint.'

'Then you design some?' said the marquis.

'Yes, I have practised some at it.'

De Montigny expressed himself very much pleased with the youth's industry, and took occasion to assure him that such a habit must sooner or later find its reward. But Henry, with a smile, assured him in return that he had already found his reward—that the reward of a studious, upright, industrious man always kept company with the improvement, and the nobleman was constrained to admit that it was so.

It had now become quite dark, and at a motion from the marquis our hero arose from his seat and turned towards the door. Isidore bade him 'good night,' but she did not speak so boldly and freely as she had done upon his entrance. Her voice was more low now, and there a slight tremulousness in it, too. Of course her father did not notice it, but Henry did, not, however, because it struck him with any particular idea, but because he noticed her every look and movement.

That night, when the youth retired to his couch, he wished that Isidore de Montigny was nearer to his own level of social life. He wished

this because he thought how pleasant it would be to have the company of such a person to converse with when he pleased.

And Isidore herself may have not been without some such thoughts, for in the whole circle of her aristocratic acquaintance there was not a single individual who could answer in the least to Henry Fretart's description. The reader may judge somewhat of her position in that respect when he is informed that the Count Arnaud Montfere was the youngest man among the nobility who ever visited her father's chateau, save some few who were either mere children, or else already married. And Arnaud Montfere was forty, at least.

Several days passed away, and during that time Henry saw Isidore several times. One pleasant day he went up to the top of a hill back of the chateau with his drawing pencils and colors, for he had noticed that from that point he could command a most excellent view of the place. It was quite early in the morning when he arrived at his point of observation, and having spread out his paper—quite a large sheet, he commenced his drawing. The distant mountains and hills formed the extreme background, then came a glimpse of the broad river, and then the noble chateau. By noon the sketch was perfect save some slight touches in filling up, and that he left until afternoon. After dinner he went back to his post and finished the sketch. It was so calm and pleasant that he resolved to do the coloring there, and so having brought a cup of water from a spring close at hand he set about the work.

It was about four o'clock, and he had just brought his picture so near its finish that all that remained was the softening and toning of some of the lights and shades. The eyes of the young artist were sparkling, and his cheeks were all aglow, for he knew he had made a capital picture. The subject was an excellent one, and he knew he had done it a fair share of justice, at least.

He was just touching the soft shadow of an old tree in the foreground when he heard a footfall near him, and on looking up he saw Isidore de Montigny. She approached him and gazed upon the picture that lay upon the board in his lap. The youth was at first confounded by this unexpected presence, but he quickly recovered himself, and laying aside his pencils he arose to his feet.

'I did not think to find you here,' said Isidore, as she still followed the picture with her eyes. 'I came out to smell the fresh, sweet air, and at a short distance off I espied you. Of course I could not resist the temptation to come and see what you were doing.'

This was spoken with a sweet smile, and Henry replied:

'I have been here all day, mademoiselle. I was up here day before yesterday, and the chateau from this point presented such a beautiful subject, that I could not resist the temptation to come up here and fasten it upon paper.'

'And did you make that picture yourself?' asked the maiden with undisguised pleasure and surprise.

'Yes,' returned Henry, holding it up and placing it in a favorable light. 'I have cherished the art for two reasons: The first is, because I feel that such pursuits are calculated, if rightly viewed and studied, to purify the mind and exalt the thoughts; and the second, which is the most power-

ful with me, is that it may one day place me beyond the influence of poverty and want.'

'What a lovely picture,' Isidore uttered. 'How soft and warm, and how true to the life. I can surely look through those trees into the park beyond, and I can hear the sighing of the gentle zephyr that moves that genial foliage. How natural!'

At that moment Henry felt more pride than he would had all the kings of earth fell down at his feet. The warm, unaffected praise of that beautiful maiden went to his very soul, and it moved most joyfully.

'If you would not be offended, lady,' said the youth, 'I would ask you to accept this poor gift as a token of the deep esteem of one who can appreciate worth even though its possessor be far above me in life.'

'Oh, I shall accept it most joyfully,' said Isidore. 'But my selfishness will not stop there. You must give to me the secret of the craft. You must learn me to draw. Will you not?'

'If your father consents, lady, I should be most happy.'

'Oh, of course he will consent,' uttered the maiden, with sparkling eyes. 'He will be pleased to have me gain such a privilege. I have often expressed a wish to learn to draw, and he had promised me that he would embrace the first opportunity that presented itself. So we may consider that point settled. Oh, if I could only learn to draw and color like that; why, I should have the old chateau's walls all covered with pictures in a year. The thing is settled, monsieur, and from hence you are my teacher—but you must not be a very strict one, for I was always taught to have my own way.'

'Because your own choice was sure to lead you rightly, I suppose,' replied Henry, warmly.

'You flatter, sir.'

'Truth is not flattery, lady.'

'Then you believe me a paragon?'

'Not exactly so did I mean,' returned the youth, gazing fixedly into the maiden's smiling face. 'I only meant that a mind and soul like yours could not give birth to feelings or impulses that would lead to the commission of wrong. I will soften some of the more abrupt points before I relinquish the picture to your keeping.'

'Just as you please, only you must let me have it to show to my father this evening, and you can fix it up about the abrupt points, as you call them, to-morrow. Oh, I do so long to commence. Don't you think I shall learn to draw very quickly?'

'If you give your attention to it you certainly will.'

'You need not fear on that account, I assure you. When I once resolve upon a study I can stick to it.'

As the light hearted girl thus spoke, she handed the picture back to Henry, for she had taken it from him without leave, and then she turned towards the spot where his pencils lay.

'Come,' she said, 'you must gather up your things and go back with me. My father is at home now, and I would know his decision as soon as possible.'

Henry Fretart spoke no word in reply, but he gathered up his pencils and water colors, and when he was ready the maiden moved close to his

side and started on down the hill. The youth felt a strange fluttering at his heart, and it was sometime before he could bring his mind into shape for calm conversation. But Isidore rattled away without stint. She had found a subject for thought that made her heart light, and she noticed not that her companion was moved by anything save a native diffidence, and she seemed to strive to dispel that by her volubility. At length, however, Henry overcame his diffidence, and his conversation became animated and interesting, and in proportion as he grew fluent did she become silent and attentive. The conversation turned upon the ocean, and ocean life as contrasted with life upon shore, and at length Henry commenced an account of a passage he once made to America, and he gave some description of men and manners as he saw them in New York and Boston. He spoke with much understanding, and Isidore listened attentively, and by the time he had concluded his narrative they had reached the chateau.

Before Henry Fretart slept that night the marquis had engaged him to teach his child the art of drawing. The preliminaries were all arranged, and the youth found himself in a position as novel as it was unexpected, and as strange and embarrassing as it was novel. He resolved to go on, however, and do the best he could, and for fear he might allow himself to become too much interested in his pupil he resolved that he would not be with her any more than he could possibly avoid, and that he would crush out any and every symptom of feeling, more than due respect, that might manifest itself in his soul!

Very wise and most sage conclusion! Perhaps Isidore de Montigny made the same resolve. At all events, such an arrangement, in order to be effective, should always be mutual.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## A TRANSACTION OF MOMENT.

HENRY FRETART commenced his course of instructions to Isidore de Montigny. He had himself received the most careful training in his commencement, for the old artist of whom he had learned was governed more by a pride in the art than by any desire to make his pencil perfect, and hence he made all the stress he could upon the preliminaries, intending no doubt, that the youth should not receive more than the rudiments from him without more pay. But Henry had been too quick for him, for, having thus learned the rudiments so perfectly he strode on into the mysterious depths of the art without the power of the penurious old fellow to prevent it. And so did the youthful tutor now have the power to make his own first lessons to his fair pupil the more plain and substantial. He took all the pains in his power, and he was more than recompensed by the gratitude and appreciation which she evinced.

It was on the morning of the third day after Henry had commenced his instructions that the Count Arnaud Montfere rode into the court of the chateau. It was a beautiful morning, and the count was dressed with the most scrupulous nicety. He gave his horse to one of the grooms, and immediately afterwards he was met upon the piazza by the marquis. The Marquis de Montigny knew Arnaud Montfere only as the richest man in the province, and as a nobleman of sure standing. He may have known that he sometimes allowed wine to get the mastery over him, but that circumstance dwelt not in his mind.

'So you've come to see me at last,' said the marquis, as he took the count by the hand and shook it warmly. 'By my faith, I had about made up my mind that you were either dead, or had evacuated the province.'

'Oh, no; but I have been very busy,' replied Montfere, exercising a frankness that did not belong to him, but which he endeavored to put on when in the company of such a man as he knew the marquis to be. 'I have been very busy, my dear marquis, and so I have had to deprive myself of so great a pleasure.'

De Montigny smiled a reply, and then led his guest into the chateau. Wine was brought, and various topics of conversation were engaged in. At length the count's reserve wore off, and drawing his chair closer to his host, he said:

'I am now going to broach a subject which has long occupied my thoughts, and which I have perhaps before hinted at, though I am inclined to think that you have never understood me. You know our estates join each other?'

'Yes,' returned the marquis, with an air of deep attention. 'They do join each other; and two finer estates are not to be found in the province.'

'That's true, my dear marquis. By the mass, I doubt if there be two finer estates in the kingdom.'

'Perhaps not,' rejoined de Montigny.

'And,' added Montfere, 'where will you find two estates that would look better made into one? Where are the two estates that could be so beautifully laid out together, for comfort, pleasure, and convenience?'

'I never thought of it before; but upon my soul there's sense in it,' replied the marquis, thoughtfully. 'It is just as you say. But,' he added, looking up with a smile, 'I am not prepared to buy at such a price as you must hold your estate at, and I'm sure I am not prepared to sell at—'

'Stop, stop, my dear marquis. You are dull. What would my estate be worth to me but for your society and that of your family? Sell? No, no. Isn't there another idea that strikes you?'

The marquis looked into the face of his interlocutor, but he did not speak. He was deeply engaged in thought, as the passing shades upon his countenance indicated.

'Don't you comprehend me?' Montfere continued.

'Not exactly, my dear count.'

'Then I must explain. You have only one heir?'

'Only one,' the marquis responded. 'My dear child is my only heir.'

'And you will never marry again?'

'No. I am too old for that.'

'Just so,' said the count, drinking another glass of wine, and then, clearing his throat, he added: 'And I have no near relatives living. If I should die now my estate would be scrambled after by some score of distant cousins, or something of that sort. But I want an heir, my dear friend. I want when I leave this mundane sphere, to leave my great property in the hands of some one who will take care of it, and appreciate the gift. I have seen your daughter—I have walked with her, rode with her, and conversed with her; and is it a wonder that I have learned to love her? Here Montfere placed his hand upon his heart, and with a most tender look and tone he added: 'And now it has come to this; if I would be happy on earth I must possess the sweet love and confidence of Isidore de Montigny. Oh, my friend, you cannot refuse me.'

The marquis did not evince any signs of astonishment at this announcement, though it moved him with deep interest. And his looks did not betray any opposition. The count noticed this on the instant, and in a persuasive tone, with his hand still upon his heart, he resumed:

'Thus would our estates become one, as our interests would become one also. To those who shall rise up in after years, bearing our names, and wearing the honors of our united houses, we should leave a fitting store of this world's goods; and I know that my wife would be one who would be sure to leave no droppings from her tongue but those of truth and wisdom. This may be new and unexpected to you, my friend, but it has long been cherished as the very apple of my earthly hopes and aspirations. What say you?'

'Why, in truth, my dear count, it is new and unexpected to me,' returned De Montigny, in a slow, but calm tone. 'Some such thoughts, I must confess, have at times flitted through my mind, but they have been very vague, and rather the dim figures of possibility than the forebodings of anything like probability.'



'But you will think of it now my friend. You know my wishes, and the path of consideration is plain before you. But you must not disappoint me—you must not break my heart.'

'Upon my knightly honor,' spoke De Montigny, with quick energy, 'I do like the picture.' He had been thinking with deep earnestness, and as he now spoke he raised his head and hand at the same time, and his hand came down upon the table with much emphasis. 'You are somewhat advanced in life; to be sure; but I do not know as that should make much difference.'

'Why should it?' quickly interposed Montfere, with sparkling eyes, for the words which his host had spoken had made him exceedingly hopeful. 'There may be younger men in the kingdom, but where will she find a better home? I am not forty yet—not forty, *mon ami*; and I have no doubt that when you look back to the age of forty you feel as though you were then quite a young man.'

'Younger than I am now, at all events,' replied the marquis, with a smile. 'But you must remember that I am not yet an old man—only fifty.'

'True—but then ten years is considerable to add to a man's lifetime. But then forty years just brings a man into the prime of life and experience.'

'So it does, Montfere—so it does; and I do not consider you a whit too old. Yet I must think of this matter.'

'Of course you should take time to consider upon it,' said the count very sentimentally, for it is a question of vast moment. But I have considered upon it long and deeply. I did not, as soon as I became enamored of the Lady Isidore, resolve that she should be my wife, but I first sat me down and calmly considered upon the subject. I asked myself if I could make a good and faithful husband, and if I could make a true and loving wife happy. And then I asked myself if I could devote that care and attention to the welfare of a young and lovely female which such an one as your child would deserve. I pondered upon these points carefully, and having settled them all with a calm and devoted understanding, I have resolved to know my fate. I shall be very unhappy if my hopes are all blasted now, and yet I shall not blame you for any course you may in your parental wisdom see fit to take. Only one thing gives me any fear.'

'What is that?' asked the marquis, showing by his looks that he was very favorably impressed by his companion's manner, and speaking in a tone, and with an expression, which seemed to indicate that he hoped there would be no occasion for fear.

'Perhaps,' answered Montfere, 'the Lady Isidore will be governed by the first impression which the subject makes upon her mind, and that, you are probably aware, may be one of prejudice. She may not at first realize what superior social advantages the position will afford her.'

'O, I guess not.'

'But you know how far prejudice sometimes can go with inexperienced girls, and how tenaciously they will cling to it.'

'I am aware of all that, and I am also aware that I have not yet given up all parental control of my child. Be assured my dear count, that if I conclude that it would be best for Isidore to take a certain step in life, that step will be taken.'



This last sentence was spoken very slowly, and with strong emphasis, and Arnaud Montfere, unable to restrain his gratification, reached out and grasped his host by the hand.

'I could not have advised you to such a course,' he said, 'but yet it is surely the only true one. We should never suffer our children to pursue a course against our will, especially when we are convinced that our decision is for the good of all concerned. But you will consider upon this.'

'Yes, I will. And to open our hearts wider upon such a new and novel occasion, and, I may say, important occasion, we will open another bottle of wine.'

The marquis reached towards the bell-cord as he spoke, and at the same time the count was moved by a strong emotion. He hesitated a moment, and the twitching of his facial muscles showed how difficult it was for him to make up his mind; But before the bell was rung he caught his host's arm.

'Stop, my dear marquis,' he said. 'I think we have drank enough. Perhaps you are aware that in times gone by I have indulged at times deeply in the wine-cup. Have you never heard of such a thing?'

'I may have heard it spoken of, but that is nothing,' returned De Montigny, unwilling to make any remark of censure.

'But it is much to me,' added the count, with a show of great sincerity. 'In times gone by I have had no one to care for but myself, and I have not been so circumspect as he should be who would take upon his charge the happiness of another. No, my friend, no more wine now, for I have resolved that henceforth the tempting glass shall never hold its syren power over me.'

Who could doubt that the speaker of such a sentence was honest and sincere? Philip de Montigny did not doubt it, and from that moment his mind was made up that Arnaud Montfere should be his son-in-law. He was himself an honest man, and he believed that his visitor was honest, too; and this resolution proved to him, as he thought, that the suitor for the hand of his child was really and truly qualified to make her happy.

'My dear Montfere,' he said, extending his hand, 'your resolution gives me the greatest pleasure, and it proves to me that you are really desirous to make a kind and good husband.'

'O, uttered the count, still holding De Montigny's extended hand, 'I wish I dared to hope that you would bless me as I ask. God only knows what a happy man I should be.'

This was spoken in a tone so earnest, and so full of pathos, that even a more coldly disposed man than the marquis might have been moved by it, and he immediately said:

'You may hope, my friend—you may hope; for since we have been conversing upon the subject I have examined it with considerable care, and my mind is about made up in your favor. The truth is, there is no knowing at what moment I may be called away, and surely my child should have some safe standpoint for life. Among all our acquaintances I do not know of another eligible match for her. You may hope, sir, and I doubt not your hopes will be blessed with fruition.'

This was the height of Arnaud Montfere's present wishes, for he knew

the marquis well enough to know that he would not be easily moved from what he had once resolved upon. He had long been desirous of gaining the lady Isidore for a wife, for even his gross mind appreciated something of her beauty, and he loved her—not as the noble, high-minded lover, but as the satiated libertine can love. Of his moral character De Montigny knew comparatively nothing, for always in his presence the count had assumed the most pleasing exterior he could command. And this the count had done in furtherance of his own plans and desires. He wanted the beauty of Isidore de Montigny, and more still did he want the fine estate to which she was the undisputed heiress. He had long looked upon this property with longing eyes, and he had reasons for it, too—reasons which none save himself among his friends suspected. One thing made the estate of the marquis more pleasant than his own. The former was upon the broad and much travelled Ille, whose waters at that point were always teeming with life, while the latter was further back, and watered by a much smaller stream called the de Vaux, taking its name from a former owner of the estate. Yet as we have before said, the de Vaux estate was by far the most valuable.

‘My dear, good marquis,’ exclaimed Montfere, rising and embracing him, ‘you know not how happy you have made me, and I hope we may both live, so that I can prove my gratitude in something more palpable than words. I do not think you will cast me down from the pinnacle of happiness to which you have raised me.’

‘You need not fear,’ replied the marquis, with equal warmth. ‘I shall inform my child of what has transpired, and she shall prepare at once for the business. And now let us walk out and see my grounds. I have had some new vines since you were here last, and there are new exotics, too, in the garden. Come.’

And so Arnaud Montfere followed his host out into the garden, and as he walked along, looking almost like a giant by the side of the much smaller marquis, his face bore the signs of the deep exultation which he had not the power to conceal.

## CHAPTER IX.

A STARTLING ENCOUNTER, WITH A STILL MORE STARTLING FINALE.

HENRY had just finished his morning's lesson to his fair pupil and while Isidore was re-examining some work he had given her to copy he went to the window and looked down into the garden. The marquis and the count had just finished their tour through the grounds, and were returning when Henry looked out. At first he thought the individual whom he saw with the marquis was a perfect stranger to him, but as the pedestrians came nearer to the chateau he recognized the face of the stranger as one which he had seen before, and after a moment's thought he remembered the circumstances under which he had seen it. He remembered that he had seen that same man once skulking about his humble cottage home by the sea, and that he had found him evidently watching him on several other occasions. So he was moved by something beside mere curiosity now.

‘Mademoiselle,’ he said, turning towards his pupil, ‘will you step this way a moment?’

The maiden quickly laid aside the sheet of paper she had been examining, and went to the window.

‘Can you tell me who that man is with your father?’ our hero asked, at the same time pointing towards the individual with his finger.

‘That is the Count Montfere—Arnaud Montfere,’ returned Isidore, with a slight shudder.

Henry noticed that shudder in an instant, and a feeling which he could not have explained had he tried shot through his soul.

‘And what is he?’ the youth asked, assuring himself on the instant that he had no business to trouble himself about what might affect his pupil.

‘He owns the great chateau de Vaux, just over the hill,’

‘But what sort of a man is he?’

‘I can only tell you that he is a very unpleasant companion, and that his looks are not at all in his favor, so far as my judgement of physiognomy is concerned. He has not been here before for a long time.’

‘He seems to be examining the premises with much care,’ remarked Henry.

‘So he does,’ responded Isidore, with another shudder. ‘O, I hope father will not sell them to him.’

‘Why, was ever such a thing broached? Did he ever think of buying them?’

‘I remember once he hinted at such a thing. He said both the estates ought to go together, and that he wished he could bring such a thing about.’

‘And was that all he said?’

‘I believe so.’

Henry Fretart gazed eagerly into his companion's face, for an idea had presented itself very quickly to his mind which never seemed to have entered hers; but he made no mention of it, though the thought was somehow very painful to him; and again he asked himself what he had to do with his pupil's affairs.

'O, I hope he will go before I go down,' uttered Isidore, turning away from the window as the two men had passed from sight beyond the angle of one of the walls. 'His company is very disagreeable.'

But the sweet girl was doomed to disappointment, for ere long her father sent for her, and she was forced to join him in one of the drawing-rooms, where she found Arnaud Montfere awaiting her coming. She saluted the count with as much politeness as she could command, and she was very agreeably disappointed at finding him much less boorish than he had been on former occasions.

The truth was, Montfere was sober now, and he did all in his power to make himself agreeable. He saw where the maiden's likes and dislikes lay, and he made himself very considerate and polite. He was informed that she was at present taking lessons in drawing and coloring, and he entered into an elaborate and extensive panegyric upon the art. He wished to know of whom she was receiving her instructions, but he only learned that it was a poor artist who was stopping at the chateau for a few days.

Not a word was said upon the subject of the morning's conference, for the marquis had promised to speak with his child upon that point at such a time as he should think proper. The count remained to dinner, and so well did he behave that Isidore made up her mind that she could bear his company once in a while, if he would not come too often, and would always keep sober when he did come. But there was something in his countenance that repulsed her from any intimacy. His features were all thick and sensual. His lips were thick, especially the lower one, and then his nose had a tendency to flatness. And then his peculiar grey eyes were against him. Their light was flickering, uncertain, and Isidore did not fail to notice when they sparkled and when they did not. She noticed that his eyes did not always corroborate the statement of his tongue, and only did they sparkle with any degree of inward appreciation when some allusion was accidentally made in a sensual direction. At the mention of wine and wassail, and at the thought of money and treasure, his eyes would light up with that peculiar fire which shows that the inner man is appreciating it. But while he was praising art his eyes were as cold and unsteady as a Laplander's would be at the thought of fine linen and starch. In short, Isidore de Montigny read him well enough to satisfy herself that he was far from being either a good man or a true one, and she felt a sense of great relief when he arose to depart, though she could not appreciate her father's earnest request that he should come again as soon as possible.

But Arnaud Montfere did not leave any too soon for his own credit, for he was beginning to forget the solemn assurance he had given to his host, and was drinking rather more wine than became an abstemious man. However, he did not lose himself, and he left before he had drank enough to expose his prevailing weakness to the marquis.

The road, which was followed in going from the chateau de Montigny to the chateau de Vaux ran along upon the bank of the Ille about a quarter of a mile to the southward, and then it followed the little river de Vaux to the eastward nearly three miles. After Isidore had left him, Henry Fretart took his sketching implements and went out on this road

to sketch a scene upon the small stream where an old mill stood by the side of a steep fall. He had taken the sketch and was on his return home, having nearly reached the main road, when he heard the sound of horse's hoofs, and on looking ahead he saw Arnaud Montfere coming. His first impulse was to leave the road and pursue his way to the chateau across the fields, but he knew that he had been seen by the horseman, and he would not show any desire to escape him; and furthermore he would like to know something more of the man. He was armed, so he had no fear of personal danger.

In a few moments the horseman came up, and as their eyes met he stopped.

'Hallo!' he shouted, partly in surprise and partly in command. 'Who are you?'

'I am a man, sir, free born, and of lawful age,' was Henry's reply, at the same time gazing the count steadily in the eye.

'You are pert, at all events. But what are you doing up here?' A quick answer was upon the youth's lips, but he thought the easiest manner to pass this point would be the simple truth, and he replied:

'I have been back here a short distance to sketch an old mill.'

'Sketch an old mill? What do you mean?'

'I mean to take a drawing of it—to make a picture of it,' returned Henry, rather tartly, speaking as though he were teaching a child the definition of a very simple word.

Arnaud Montfere changed color in an instant, and his grey eyes burned with a deep fire.

'You are an artist, then?' he said, drawing his rein tight that he might hide the tremulousness of his hand.

'I sometimes amuse myself in that way,' answered Fretart.

'And it is you who are giving lessons to the Lady Isidore de Montigny?'

'I am,' answered our hero moving back apace, for he did not like the looks of the count's movements.

Montfere sprang from his saddle and approached the youth with a quick step; but he stopped before he had reached him, and placed his hand within his bosom. Henry did the same, for he carried his pistol in that place.

'You are a deserter, sir!' uttered the count, seeming almost too deeply moved to speak.

'I am no deserter,' quickly retorted the youth, turning a shade paler than usual.

'You are a deserter, and you deserted from the English man-of-war that laid in the harbor of St. Malo a short time since.'

'It is false, sir. I am no deserter. I was brutally seized and carried on board that ship—and,' continued the youth, the idea flashing like a shock of lightning upon him, 'I believe you had a hand in it!'

'Me? Ha, ha, ha,' laughed the count; but the laugh was a spasmodic one, and he could not hide the fact that the accusation had startled him somewhat. 'Me?' he added. 'You are very witty, very.'

'I have seen you skulking around my father's cot, sir,' cried Henry

'and I have noticed you dogging me in the street. It was some enemy, who caused my cowardly seizure, and why may it not have been you?'

'Ha, ha, ha. And why should I cherish enmity towards such as you?'

Now this question caused a very curious train of thoughts to flash through our hero's mind—and they did *flash* through, for he was not ten seconds engaged in them. But first came the remark he had heard the smuggler make about the cause of his impressment—then came the mystery of his birth—and then he thought that this Count Arnaud Montfere might have some strange reason for fearing him. Such were the thoughts that rushed through the young man's mind, and stepping back a pace he said:

'I have no means of answering your question, sir; but you will prove that you are no enemy of mine by pursuing your own way, and allowing me to pursue mine.'

'If you are a deserter, I am not so ready to let you go.'

'And are you nothing but a hanger-on for British gold?' cried Henry, with bitter sarcasm. 'Do our French nobles do the dirty work of English press-gangs?'

Hardly had these words passed the young man's lips when Montfere sprang towards him. Henry drew his pistol, but before he could cock it, it was knocked from his grasp, and on the next instant the count presented his own pistol.

'I'll teach you to draw a pistol upon a French nobleman!' he muttered between his clenched teeth.

His finger was upon the trigger, and Henry saw it, and he felt sure, too, that the villain meant to kill him. He could now smell the strong fumes of wine, and he knew that his adversary would be reckless of consequences. With all his might the youth drew himself from the grasp that held him, and then with one blow of his fist he sent the count reeling to the opposite side of the road. He meant to have knocked his pistol away from him, but he did not. After this our hero's first movement was to look for his own pistol, but it was some seconds before he could search it out, and just as he was about to spring towards it, he heard a low, brutal chuckle from his enemy. He stopped and turned, and he saw the count seated upon the grass, with his left hand stretched out to steady himself, while with the right he was pointing a heavy pistol directly at him. The pistol was cocked, and the count's eye was levelled to its sight.

'You are too late, you young fisher's bastard!' muttered Montfere. 'Your life is spent for this world. You won't attempt to shoot another French nobleman upon the king's highway!'

Henry knew well what this last senecet meant. The villain count could now shoot him, and then swear that he did it in self-defence. He might tell that he 'attempted to arrest the youth, as was his right, and that the fellow drew a pistol.' And this would be true. No one would ever know that Arnaud Montfere was a murderer, save God alone!—These thoughts passed like a shot through the youth's mind while the count's pistol was being aimed directly at his heart. His own weapon was too far for him to reach it, and even had it been at his feet it would have been of no use, for his enemy was ready to fire at any instant.

'Hold a moment,' said the count, still keeping his aim, with his finger upon the trigger. 'Before I shoot you, young man, let me tell you that I know you! No person on earth can save you, for you and I cannot both live in France. You would have been—Beware! Move about a hair and I fire—You would have been wise had you remained on board the Englishman, but it is too late now, for you know too much! Shut your eyes now, for you have seen your last of earth!'

Henry Fretart did shut his eyes, for he had no power to help himself, but it was not with fear. He would utter one word of prayer, and if he lived to do that, then he meant to spring upon his antagonist and run the risk. He just murmured a simple prayer, and then he opened his eyes. He saw the muzzle of the pistol drop—a brushing sound near him—an oath dropped from the count's lips, and on the next moment a female form stood between himself and the weapon that had menaced him with death.

'Arnaud Montfere, what would you do?' spoke the presence that had thus unexpectedly come upon the ground.

'Save my own life from an assassin!' gasped the count, starting to his feet.

'Liar!' spoke the woman, in a tone so bitter that even Henry shuddered to hear it.

The woman looked upon our hero, and he returned the gaze. She was a tall, commanding woman, somewhere in the prime of physical life, and though deeply bronzed, yet she was comely in feature. Her eyes were black as coal, her hair long, black, and floating wildly over her shoulders, and her dress somewhat after the style of the wandering gipsies of the times, though rich in material, and scrupulously neat and clean. Her head was now bare, but in her left hand she carried a silken hat, and in her right she held a heavy, silver-mounted pistol. Those eyes seemed to pierce the youth through like gleams from a magic wand, and upon her face sat a spirit that moved him so strangely that for the while he forgot all about the scene through which he had just passed.

Again she turned towards the count, and as he now met the glance of her eyes he started back and actually trembled so that his pistol dropped from his grasp, exploding from the concussion of the fall, but without doing any harm.

'Arnaud Montfere,' she said, in a deep, strange tone, 'you cannot deceive me. There is murder in your soul. Ah, you need not start, for you see I am armed.' And she raised her ready pistol as she spoke.

'Woman, or fiend, who are you?' the count gasped, clutching his hands above his eyes and gazing like one half-crazed. 'Who are you?'

'One who could put you in mind of a person you would not wish to hear from. Oh, you need not look so sharply, for you will know me not, even when you think you know me most. Now get thee upon thy horse and be off. Stop not here if you would not die! Your horse waits for you.'

Arnaud Montfere stood like one thunder-struck, and for a moment he moved not. He tried at length to speak, but his words failed him. He looked upon Henry Fretart, and his eyes gleamed with a quick fire,

and his hands were clutched with nervous force. But he looked again upon the woman, and his eyes became vacant with wildness, and his hands rested convulsively upon his bosom.

'Speak!' he uttered, moving as though he would have taken a step forward, but yet remaining where he was. 'Speak—and tell me—'

'Mount your horse and be off!' interrupted the woman, imperatively. 'It shall be the worse for you if you do not.'

The count hesitated a moment more, and then he stooped and picked up the pistol he had dropped, and when he had secured this he turned towards his horse. His movements were slow and hesitating, and there was a palpable tremor all through his frame. At length he reached his saddle, and as he gathered up his reins he turned towards Henry Fretart.

'I should not have thought of harming you if you had not drawn a pistol upon me,' he said, in a forced tone.

'Ah, your words on the occasion give the lie to that!' retorted the youth.

'What words?'

'You remember what you said.'

'Pooh! Would you place importance to them? I meant only that no man could live who had attempted my own life. That is what I meant, and all I meant. I meant to have arrested you as a deserter—that was all—and you tried to shoot me.'

'Out, false man!' cried the woman. 'You need not say more.'

'But it is true, what I have said.'

'Then so be it. Go now.'

Arnaud Montfere gave one more look upon the youth, but he did not speak, for on the instant he met the gaze of the strange woman, and with a low, muttered curse he started his horse on. He did not turn to look back, though once he almost stopped his horse.

'He is loading his pistol,' said the woman.

And so he was, and when it was loaded he placed it back in his bosom, and ere long afterwards he had disappeared beyond the small hill to the right of which stood the old mill.

## CHAPTER X.

### HEART STRUGGLE.

**A**FTER Arnaud Montfere had passed from sight, Henry Fretart turned towards his strange companion. He found her gazing upon him, and again his eyes were fastened upon her by a power that seemed above his own. He had surely seen that face before, but when or where he could not tell. The woman smiled upon him, and the smile was sweet to his soul.

'Henry Fretart,' she said, 'I have saved you from that man now, but hereafter you must beware of him, for he means you harm.'

'Never mind him now,' returned the youth, with nervous anxiety, 'I know him for a villain; but of yourself I would know?'

'And what of me?'

'Who are you?'

'That would do you no good.'

'Yes it would. Do not put me off so. Tell me who you are?'

'Not now, Henry—it would do you no good. In time you shall know. But beware of Arnaud Montfere. He is a villain, and he means you harm. You have friends, but they cannot always be with you. Keep your eyes open, and be ever on the alert for him.'

'I will, I will,' vehemently cried the youth. 'I will; but you shall tell me what I ask. You shall tell me who you are. O, do not refuse me?'

'Not now, my friend. You will have as much as you can do to mind the wicked count, without minding me. We shall meet again.'

'No, no—you shall not leave me,' exclaimed Henry, as the woman moved as though she would have turned away. 'In the name of God, I bid you stop! I have known you in other times—in other years. Do not shake your head, for I know I have—I have seen you when I was not so old as I am now. O, speak, and tell me who you are?'

'I am one who would serve you, Henry Fretart.'

'Call me not by that name!' the young man cried, seizing the woman by the arm. 'Call me by my right name!'

The woman trembled like an aspen, but she did not shrink from the hand that was laid upon her.

'What mean you, mad boy?' asked she, in a hushed, subdued tone. 'Is not your name Henry Fretart?'

'No, no—you know it is not!'

'Then you should surely know the truth as well as I. Ask me no more, but let me go.'

'No, no—not yet shall you go. Tell me what I ask. O, tell me who you are?'

'I can tell you nothing. I have saved you now, and I will save you again if I have power when there is need, though I hope that need may never come.'

'Once more—tell me what I ask? Who are you?'

The youth spoke in a frenzied tone, and his whole frame trembled.

'One thing I forgot,' said the woman, speaking hurriedly, and in a subdued tone. 'Speak not of what has happened at the chateau, for we must not frighten Arnaud Montfere. Let others have the handling of him, and until our meshes are ready be you on your guard. We shall meet again, and then you may ask your questions.'

'But you must answer now. I ask you once more—who are you? Speak.'

But she did not speak, and the young man continued:

'I know your face—I know your sweet smile; there is that in your features which cannot be blotted from the page of my memory. I can look back many long years—clear away back to the time when sweet lullabies hushed me to slumber, and at that time your eyes beamed upon me. O, you need not shake your head so surely, for I know you remember those times. You remember when those eyes poured out their tears upon me. God in heaven tells me what I now know. Speak to me—tell me—tell me—tell me—that—you are my—MOTHER!'



'Thy mother, boy?'

'Yes, yes, I know it. My God and my own heart tell me so.'

'No, no, no!' shrieked the woman. She threw her arms about the young man's neck—imprinted one warm, burning kiss upon his manly cheek, and then she started away. 'I am no mother to you—none—none! No, no, no. Beware of the count—O, Henry, beware! I am no—no mother. Look to your life, for you must not die. Follow me not! Beware! if you would live, follow me not. We shall meet again.'

As the strange woman thus spoke she darted away over the fence by the foot of the hill; leaped across the swift stream from rock to rock, and in a moment more she was lost to sight in the woods beyond.

Henry watched her until she had gone from his sight, and he did not follow, for some spell seemed to bind him to the spot. When she was gone he turned to move away, but his brain reeled, and his head grew dizzy. A thousand fantastic lights seemed dancing before his eyes; then everything began to whirl about—and while he yet put forth his arms to feel his way towards a bright spirit that beckoned to him from the swiftly revolving mass, his steps faltered, his limbs grew weak, and he sank down upon the greensward, mindless of all the outer things of life.

When Henry came to himself the sun was shining down hot upon him, and was some two or three hours past its zenith, so our hero knew that he could not have laid there long. This was his first thought, for he only remembered that he had by some means fallen, and he wondered how severe his fit had been. But soon the memory of what had passed came back to him—he remembered the scene with Arnaud Montfere, and then came the strange presence that had stepped in to save his life. Was all this a dream? No, for he looked in the loose dirt in the horse-path, and he saw the track of female feet. He gazed all about him, but he could see nothing save the green fields upon one hand, and the rushing stream and the woods upon the other. Awhile he meditated upon what course to pursue. He knew that he had seen his mother; he felt morally sure of it, and he would have travelled through all the woods in the kingdom could he hope thereby to join her, and remain with her; but he remembered the words she had spoken, and the manner she had used, and he knew there would be no use in pursuit; so at length he turned his steps slowly towards the chateau, and when he reached it he at once sought his own chamber, for he knew that he looked pale and excited, and he did not wish to be questioned.

Of course our hero's thoughts must have been of a strange character, for he had seen and heard enough to make any one in like circumstances very nervous and anxious. For awhile he reflected upon the conduct of the count, and he came to the conclusion that in some manner he stood in Montfere's way—but *how* was more than he could even guess. At first he thought of taking some steps to bring the villain to an account for his assault upon him, but upon more mature deliberation he resolved to let him rest for the present. He remembered what the woman had said—the warning and the advice—and he meant to follow it. He saw that he could do nothing with the law against the nobleman, and he meant only to keep his eyes open, and always be prepared for danger.

On the next morning the youth gave his lesson to his pupil, and though she must have noticed that he was very sedate and taciturn, yet she made no remark upon it, but her manners were more tender and warm-hearted than usual, and Henry found himself drawn towards her with an affection which he did not try to overcome. Isidore saw that the youth was sad, and she thought perhaps it was his friendless position that made him so. At all events she smiled more sweetly than usual, as though she would convince him that she, at least, was his friend.

Thus passed away two weeks, and during that time Henry had neither seen the Count Montfere, nor had he heard from him. Neither had he seen the smuggler, nor the strange woman who had met him near the old mill. But old Pierre came up often to see his son, and so did the youth frequently go down to the little cot by the sea to meet his old protector.

And during these two weeks Isidore de Montigny had made rapid progress in her study of drawing—so much so, that even her father expressed himself as perfectly delighted with the evidences of her skill, and his thanks to the young artist tutor were warm and flattering.

And during these two weeks Henry Fretart had learned to love the gentle girl who had been so often his companion. Of late they had talked and read much together, and even Isidore seemed to feel more happy when the youth was by her side. Her smile was more joyous, and her cheeks wore more of the rose in their warm hue. Henry had discovered the truth, he had looked into his own heart, and he had confessed that he loved the beautiful maiden. He loved her with an ardor so strong that every sense of his soul had become wrapped up in it, and his only lamp of life that illumined the home of earth about him, was the sweet face and smile of his beloved.

But could he ever hope that his love might be reciprocated? Ah, he did hope that—and this hope at first made him happy. But then there came another thought: Could he ever possess her for his own? There came an answer up from the deep of his own judgment, and it said 'No.' And this made the youth unhappy; but he tried with all his might to conquer it, and he succeeded in becoming calm. But he could not be happy.

## CHAPTER X.

### LOVE.

ONE afternoon Henry, who was at that time sitting in his own room, heard the sound of a horse in the yard, and leaving the sketch upon which he was engaged he went to the window. It was Arnaud Montfere who had come, and the youth sank back into a chair almost overcome by the emotions which the sight of that man called up. But his mind was settled upon the course he would pursue, and he resolved to keep himself out of the way until the count had gone. He went back to his desk and resumed his work, but his hand trembled.

Just as the sun was setting the count left the house, and shortly after-

wards Isidore sought her own room, and blessed God that the evil-looking man was gone, for she had been obliged to keep him company nearly the whole of the afternoon. The marquis followed the count into the court, and the two remained there and conversed until nearly dark. Their words were earnest and low, and whatever may have been the subject under consideration, it must have been one of more than ordinary interest. When the marquis returned to the chateau he sought his child, but he found her not feeling very well, and he told her he would see her on the morrow. She asked him what he would speak of, but he did not tell her.

On the next forenoon Henry sat in his studio, whither he had gone to receive his pupil. It was a small room on the second floor, and overlooked the garden. It was Isidore who had given it the name of *studio*. It was now nearly time for the lesson to commence, and the tutor was ready. He had finished the outlines of a sketch, the old mill upon the de Vaux river, and he was going to instruct his pupil how to fill it up. It had a most capital chance for the effect of light and shade, and Henry hoped his fair pupil would be able to go on and put in the shades without much of his assistance.

The weather without was dark and gloomy. It had been raining during the latter part of the night, and the sky was now wholly overcast, and a cold, drizzling rain was falling. Henry felt the influence of the spell, and while he sat there in his chair his eyes turned from the dreary prospect without to the picture upon table before him. He remembered where and when he had taken the original of that sketch, and he remembered the strange circumstances that followed. He thought of that woman who had saved his life, and again the idea came to him that she was his mother. Thence his mind ran back to the days of his earlier youth, and he felt the spirit of sadness creeping over him. At length the image of his fair pupil arose to his mind, and he pondered upon the relations he sustained towards her. He loved her beyond all power of description, but he felt sure that the spirit of fate would tear her from him. The rain-drops pattered mournfully against the window, and their dull, dirge-like music struck the most sadly-tuned chords of our hero's soul. He bowed his head, and tears began to gather in his eyes.

At length the door of the apartment was opened, and Isidore entered. Henry looked up, and with a quick movement he brushed the tears from his eyes and bid her good morning; but his voice was low and sad.

'My dear teacher,' cried Isidore, moving quickly forward and laying her hand upon his shoulder, 'you are sad this morning, and you have been weeping.'

'O, no, not weeping lady,' said the youth, looking up with a faint smile.

'But there are tears upon your cheeks, even now.'

'I have been reflecting upon the past, and I have been sad. Tears, you know, sometimes flow when there has been no weeping. Joy sometimes brings tears to the eyes.'

'I know it; but tell me why you should be sad. Are you not happy here?' the maiden asked, with touching tenderness.

'O, I have been very happy here,' Henry answered quickly. 'The hours spent beneath this roof, some of them, have been the happiest of

my life; but they cannot last always. The time must soon come when those hours shall have passed away to return no more. But we will to our lesson now. See, I have prepared a beautiful study for you.'

Isidore sat down and took up a pencil, but her hand trembled so that she could not use it. She looked up and saw that new tears were starting out from her teacher's eyes.

'Ah,' she uttered, in a tone of the deepest feeling, 'you are very sad. Tell me why it is?'

'Do not ask me, lady,' answered the youth, with trembling lips. 'I will show my sadness no more.'

'But tell me what makes you sad?' persisted Isidore. 'It sometimes soothes the troubled heart only to pour out the burden of its grief to a friend. I am your friend.'

These words, spoken in tender accents, and with eyes beaming all that words could mean, touched a sensitive chord in the youth's bosom. He tried to speak, but he could not, and covering his face with his hands he sank down into his chair. In a moment more he heard the maiden move closer to him, and he felt again that soft hand upon his shoulder.

'What is it she whispered. Tell me?'

'O, if I were to tell you all, you would hate me; you would drive me from you at once.'

'You cannot have been guilty of crime?' murmured Isidore, in alarm.

'No, no, no,' quickly returned the youth; 'unless it be a crime to—'

'Speak on,' whispered the trembling girl.

'I must not tell you—I ought not to tell you,' uttered Henry, with some vehemence. 'And yet I know not what harm it can do save to myself. It will break the spell that now holds me that's all.'

'I am your friend—speak it. I shall not blame you, even if you tell me that you will teach me no more.'

Henry gazed into his companion's face a moment in silence. At length he reached forth his hand and laid upon her arm, and then he said, in a voice so low and tremulous that it seemed almost the breathing of some mournful dirge:

'I came here to your home without any previous thought or will of my own. You know the circumstances that led me here. During the first night of my stay beneath this roof I wondered what sort of a being it was whom I had saved from ruffian hands. At length I saw you, and for the first time in my life I found the wish alive in my soul that I might enjoy such society through life—such sense, such kindness, and such pureness of thought and speech—that was what attracted me. In time you came under my tutelage—and, here again there was no previous will on my part. But you came, and I taught you. I have seen you often—have conversed with you and seen all your virtue and goodness of soul. And there came a spirit spreading itself through my soul, the presence of which I knew not until it had taken post at every avenue of my thoughts. When it came or how I know not. Its power is mysterious, and no tongue can picture it. But the truth is all plain to me now. My heart left its home of cheerless repose in a lonesome bosom and rested upon you. Now you know all. Spurn me not, for I am not to blame. It is not my fault that I have loved you, for it came of circumstances over which I

could hold no control. But it must pass now. The heart must return to itself, but its joy will be gone—its image of life will be torn away, and all buried in grief it must bleed and weep. You know now why I am sad. Forgive me, lady.

Isidore de Montigny was strangely affected. The tears rolled down her cheeks, and with a deep, long-drawn sigh she sank forward until her head rested upon her tutor's bosom, and there she wept. Instinctively did Henry Fretart pass his arm about her waist, and in a moment more he had pressed her to his bosom and bowed his own head by the side of hers. He dared not speak—he dared not move.

And thus they remained—the tutor and the scholar—for some minutes, and the thoughts that passed through the mind of the former were so wild and frantic that they gave no reliable impress upon his mind. His arms were both about the form of the being he so wildly loved, and she did not shrink from him nor attempt to arise. Was there not a thrill of hope amongst the whirling emotions that passed him?

At length the maiden started up. She brushed the floating hair back from her eyes, and then gazed into Henry's face.

'Forgive me,' he said.

'O, my preserver, my friend, my tutor,' murmured the weeping girl, 'were I to tell you the story of my own soul for the past few weeks, I should speak exactly as you have spoken.'

'But can you mean that you love me? that your heart is mine?' whispered the youth.

'Yes, yes, and I have known it long. And why should I not love you? You are the first and only man who has ever kept me company that met my ideas of what a man should be, and I am not one who can trample the affections of the heart under the foot of cold and bleak social fallacy. I am not ashamed, nor do I fear to own it. So, let what will come, you have my heart, together with its whole load of warm and pure love.'

Once more Isidore was clasped to the lover's bosom, and after the first wild transports of joy were passed the mind of the youth turned upon the stern realities by which their love was surrounded.

'Now we know each other's secret,' he said, 'but what will your father say when he knows of it?'

'I do not know what he will say,' returned the maiden, thoughtfully, but yet with a deep shade of doubt upon her features. 'I know he is rigid in his ideas of family and rank, but then he loves me, and I do not think he would make me miserable.'

'O, what a thing is doubt and suspense,' uttered Henry, with some bitterness. 'Isidore, I will tell you a secret respecting myself. I am not the son of the poor fisherman. My father was a soldier, and was slain in battle, and my mother left me with Pierre Fretart.'

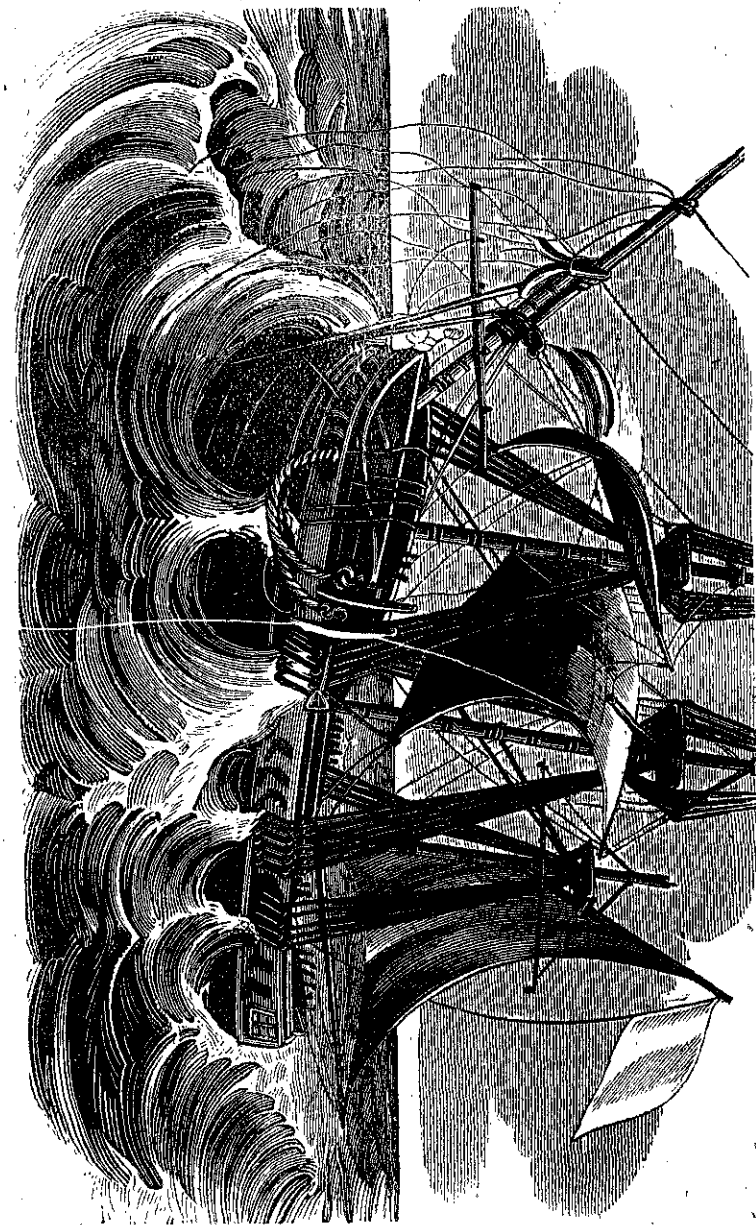
And Henry told to his companion all he knew, even to the meeting with the strange woman upon the de Vaux byway.

When he had concluded the maiden looked up with wonder depicted upon her face, and after a moment's thought she said:

'That is very strange. I have heard a story something like it before.'

'You have?' cried Henry. 'Tell me when?'

'I cannot call it to mind now. I only know that your story seems



to be a part of something that I have before heard—just as you might see some peculiar piece of machinery, or read some peculiar sentence, and the idea would come to you at once that you were familiar with it, though the cause you could not give. It must have been a long while ago, or I should remember it. But I hope you will solve the mystery. O, why may it not be possible that fate may yet lift you up among the nobles of our native France?"

This was spoken with sudden vehemence, and in a tone of hope.

'Ah, Isidore, I have dreamed that such was the fact an hundred times, but I dare not dwell upon it, with any degree of hope, for circumstances are against me. Why should my mother have left me, but through poverty? No, no, I fear there is no such fate in store. I can only be what God has made me—an honest, true hearted man.'

'And is not that enough?' cried the fair girl. 'O, if there were more who could claim such a title to fame, how much brighter would be the great page of humanity! But my father must surely appreciate your worth, even though fate has placed no bauble of rank upon your brows.'

'And thus they talked, and they let their hope outstrip their sounder sense and judgment. There was no lesson, save of love, given or received on that day, and when they at length separated they had made their first pledge. Their vows were plighted, and their hearts were one, and they were happy—happy for the brief while!

## CHAPTER XII.

### A MONSTROUS IDEA.

ON the following day Isidore went to the 'studio' and received her lesson. She filled up the sketch of the old mill with a pure taste and judgment, and the moments were sweetened by words of warm and glowing love. For they talked as though they were the only two people in existence, and as though the only circumstances that could operate upon them were their own wills. They were day-dreamers.

After dinner the marquis sought his child in her own room. He seemed in a hurry and full of business, and as he sat down upon one of the lounges he complimented the maiden upon the bloom of health that shone upon her cheeks.

'Now, Isidore,' he said, laying his hands upon his knees, 'I am going to open to you a matter of more than ordinary importance. I have had some conversation with the Count Montfere, and we have come to the conclusion that our two estates should become united.'

'That you would make one estate of them?' asked the fair girl, much surprised.

'Yes. Do you not think it would be a good plan?'

'I hope you do not mean to sell out to him, father?'

'O, no, not at all. He does not wish to buy.'

'Then you will buy, I suppose?'

'No, Isidore—not quite.'

'Then what can you mean? I hope you do not mean to join him and make the property common between you?'

'Non exactly so. Can't you think of one other way?'

'I'm sure I cannot.'

'Then I must enlighten you. Arnaud Montfere has asked me for your hand.'

'What—he? Arnaud Montfere? the count?' uttered Isidore, elevating her eyebrows, in blank astonishment.

'Yes. Now do you understand?'

'Ha, ha, ha,' laughed the maiden, really amused at the absurdity of the thing. 'He has more impudence than I gave him credit for.'

The marquis was slightly taken aback by this, but he soon recovered himself.

'He has made the proposition, Isidore, and I have listened to it.'

'Of course you would listen.'

'Yes—and I not only listened, but I told him he might hope.'

'Might hope?' uttered the maiden, beginning to think there might be something serious in the affair after all. 'Might hope for what? What did you tell him he might hope for?'

'For your hand.'

'You should not jest so, father, even with Arnaud Montfere, for he may be really in earnest, and take you to be the same.'

'Upon my soul, Isidore, it is you who are inclined to jest. Montfere was in earnest, and so was I. I hope you do not think that you are always going to live here with me?'

'Of course not. I expect at some time, if I live, to be married.'

'Just so; and here is a chance—and a most excellent chance.'

'Do you mean the chance to marry with Arnaud Montfere? Do you mean that you would under any circumstances, suffer that man to marry with your child?'

'Most assuredly I would; and to convince you of it, I have only to tell you that already I have promised him that you should be his wife.'

Isidore turned pale, for she felt sure now that her father was in earnest; yet she did not fully realize that the affair was settled, for it was one of such rank, unmitigated absurdity to her mind that she could not take it all in at one swoop.

'I most surely understand what you say,' she at length replied, 'but it is entirely beyond my power to comprehend your meaning, for I cannot think that you have given the subject any consideration, but that you have chosen to speak with me before doing so.'

'You are entirely mistaken, my child,' returned the marquis. 'I have considered upon the subject for a long while, and I have made up my mind only after the most mature deliberation. It is sure that all interests require that you should marry. The next thing is a husband. Now among all my acquaintances I know of none better qualified than the count. He is not an old man—he has understanding and experience—is kind to his friends—and possesses one of the finest estates in the province—I may safely say, the finest. He can give you a good home, and

you will then be in a position of standing and importance in society. So I have made up my mind as I have told you.'

For some moments after her father had ceased speaking, Isidore sat in silence. Her face changed its hue many times, but a bright flush of indignation was the final settling point. Her small white hands were clasped in nervous power, and her tiny feet worked spasmodically upon the carpet.

'I am forced to believe that you are in earnest,' she at length said, 'but of course you will grant me the privilege of having some influence in the settlement of the affair?'

'Of course I will listen to what you may say, but you must remember that I am governed by experience, and I should not be likely to allow a child's prejudice to overcome it.'

'Speak not so, my father,' said the maiden, warmly. 'To even the infant God has given the instinct of self preservation, and in the bosoms of all his creatures he has planted a set of sentinels which are quicker on the scent than the mere cold judgment of older heads. I speak only of affairs of the heart. My very sense of safety and joy turns me from Arnaud Montfere with loathing and disgust, and sooner than become his wife I would lay me down here and die. Such a thing can never be.'

The marquis was considerably moved by this. He had not expected such a demonstration, and for a few moments he was at a loss how to proceed. Through all his experience as a father he had never yet found one feature in Isidore's disposition that he could have wished different. She was kind, faithful, loving, dutiful, and ever mindful of his joy and comfort, and she had nursed him when he was sick, and been the light of his home when he was well. But he looked upon her now, and her timidity was gone, for she was called upon to protect the dearest right of her soul. Yet he had given his word, and he had resolved upon his point, and he was by no means prepared to give up.

'You will think better of this, my child,' he ventured, at length.

'Never,' was Isidore's prompt reply. 'When the timid child will court the wolf, or the shy horse seek out the home of the lion, then will I marry with Arnaud Montfere. Why, what can you be thinking of? He is old enough to be my father—he is rough and evil-looking. He is a drunkard and a libertine—and a senseless, arrogant, bad man.'

'Nay, nay, my daughter—you give too loose scope to your tongue. The count has given up his too frequent libations, and your other points are all imaginary. Let me hear no more of this. I hope I shall not be forced to use any authority to force you to do as I wish.'

'Isidore turned pale now, for her father spoke that last sentence in such a tone and manner as could leave no doubt as to his meaning.

'One word,' she uttered, with her hands clasped—'have you fully made up your mind that I shall wed with the count?'

'I have.'

'Then I can only say, you have set a torch to the fabric of our peace that shall lay the whole in ruins! And yet I cannot believe that you will force me to plant a dagger in my own bosom.'

'I wish you to take time to consider this, Isidore. Do not say any more until you can speak with some degree of fairness and consideration.'



You understand me now, and will know how and what to think. You had better overcome your prejudices, and not force me to do that which I should do before I could allow my parental authority to be crushed under your thoughtless feet.

What could the poor girl say now? She thought of Henry Fretart, and then she compared him with Arnaud Montfere, and her soul sickened at the contrast. She knew that he would not wed with the latter—her whole soul was up in arms, and as soon would she have thought of taking her own life. And yet she wished not to make her father angry, for she saw that she was restive under her refusal. And then how dark arose this cloud over the love that had so lately been pledged. What hope had she now that her father would ever look with favor upon the poor, nameless tutor! But Isidore de Montigny was not yet sunken in despair. The thought of wedding with Arnaud Montfere was yet too absurd to be held in absolute fear. She felt sure that some event would transpire to stop her father in his mad career of matrimonial planning.

'You will think of this,' said the marquis, as he rose to his feet. 'You will reflect upon what you have heard, and remember what I have expressed.'

'And father,' returned the maiden, with a calmness that surprised even herself, 'will you not reciprocate the favor, by reflecting upon what I have said?'

'Ah, my child, I shall not easily forget the disposition you have manifested, nor—'

'Stop, stop, my father,' cried Isidore, starting up and springing towards him. 'You wrong me by such words. Remember how fondly I have loved you for these many long years. Remember how true I have been since my angel mother died—and how faithfully your child has obeyed you in word and deed. Remember this, and then, if you think it would make you happier, you may remember what she said when you opened to her a life-plan that struck a dagger to her heart, and filled her soul with horror. 'Be fair and candid, my father, and you will not find much to blame in your child. O, I know you will not.'

There was a tear upon Philip de Montigny's cheek, but he quickly wiped it away, and after a moment's pause, he said,

'I do not chide you, Isidore. Only I want you to set aside all childish whims, and reflect calmly upon what I have said. In what I have done I have been governed solely by an eye to your good, and I still firmly believe that the plan will work as I have anticipated. Reflect calmly upon it, and let no childish whims step in to overthrow calm judgment.'

Isidore made no reply to this, for her father immediately turned and left the room as he ceased speaking. When he had gone she went and sat down by her window and looked out upon the garden. She felt sad and oppressed, but she did not weep. She pondered upon what she had heard, and the more she pondered the more convinced did she become that she should never be the wife of Arnaud Montfere. She saw him only as a bold, bad man, and she felt sure that her father's eyes would be opened to his true character, and that then he would be the first to op-

pose the very idea he now held. But she did not know how firm her father was in his resolve, and it was well for her own peace of mind that she did not.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE SEA AT NIGHT.

THE cold rain of the preceding day had all gone, and the warm sunshine of the day that was just closing had drunk up the dampness and left the greensward dry and grateful. Henry Fretart worked nearly the whole of the afternoon at making up a study for his fair pupil, little dreaming while he worked, of the scene that was passing between her and her father. He had finished the task, and when it was done he found that it was near sunset. He felt somewhat worn and fatigued by confinement, and he resolved to walk out upon the hill back of the chateau and see the sun sink to rest. Having made up his mind to this effect he loaded his pistols, and placed them in the inner breast pockets of his frock, he put on his cap and sallied forth. He could not but think, as he passed through the garden, how delightful it would be to have the society of Isidore now—to have her companionship during the sunset ramble; and once, at the postern, he stopped, and was half resolved to turn back and seek her, but he remembered that the marquis was at home, and that their secret love might betray itself. So he kept on alone.

It was over a mile to the top of the hill, and the path he chose to follow led through a wide copse of oak, which stretched from the garden wall, around to the left, clear to the foot of the hill. Henry reached the brow of the eminence just as the sun's lower disk had touched the distant headland of the Frehel cape, and so much absorbed was he by the glorious scene that he gave no note to other things about him. Had he looked down upon the path he had just followed, he would have seen men moving cautiously along towards the hill, and he would have seen that instead of keeping the path they kept in the wood, and seemed to be making their way around the base of the hill towards the northward and eastward.

But our youthful adventurer noticed nothing of it; he only gazed upon the magnificence before him, and wondered how any one could live, and see such scenes, and not bow in humble adoration before the God whose pencil could paint such nature. His own soul was lost in reverential awe, and he could not but thank his Maker that he had a soul capable of appreciating the beauties that surrounded him.

But the sun went down, and then the youth gazed upon the mass of molten gold that rested upon the horizon. But even this ere long deepened into a more sombre shade, and a spirit of sadness came to take the place of the wonder and admiration that had been rife in the youth's soul. A sense of loneliness crept over him, and his mind dwelt again upon the dark side of his life-picture. The dew was beginning to fall damp and



cold, and the youth thought of returning to the chateau. He arose to his feet and started to move down the hill, but he had not taken a dozen steps ere he heard a brushing sound behind him, and on the next instant his eye caught the form of a man at no great distance. A sense of danger came to him, and he quickly placed his hand upon one of his pistols, but before he could draw it he received a blow upon the side of the head which staggered him and caused him to fall, and before he could regain either his strength or his reason, he was seized by three stout men and his arms were pinioned behind him. His mind was not so much confused but that he knew all that was going on, and by the time he was lifted to his feet his mind was clear again.

'Now, my *bon vivant*, you'll come with us,' said one of the men, in a coarse, gruff voice.

Henry strove with all his might to free himself from the bonds that confined his arms, but he could not. The cords were strong, and he only gave himself pain in the attempt.

'What means this, villain?' he cried, turning fiercely upon one who had spoken.

'Only that we want you to come with us,' coolly replied the ruffian. 'So come along and mind your stops.'

'But tell me what all this means?'

'Don't play so innocent, *mon ami*, for it will be of no use. Ain't you a deserter?'

'O, villains! cowards!' gasped the youth, 'will you, too, cloak your villany, thus? I am no deserter.'

'Yes, you be. You deserted from the English ship. It's no use, for we know you did—so come along.'

Of course the youth went 'along,' for he could not well avoid it, seeing that three stout men were urging him on. But he did not lose his thoughts. The villains had not yet discovered his pistols, and he did not mean that they should if he could avoid it, and he hoped that they might yet be of some service to him. He naturally turned his thoughts upon Arnaud Montfere as the source of this outrage, and he believed that this was a plan to get him out of the way, having not the least doubt that his life would be taken if necessary to the accomplishment of any plans of the count. One thing our hero saw plainly, and that was, that resistance would be out of the question, for in the twilight he could see that his assailants were hard-looking fellows, and he had reason to believe that they were as reckless as they were stout. So he walked along quietly, but with enough of mutterings and twistings to remove the chance for them to suspect that he was meditating any deep scheme.

Henry was led to the southward towards the De Vaux road, and ere long he stood within that road at the foot of the hill by the mill, and not half-a-dozen rods from the very spot where the encounter had taken place between himself and Montfere. A little further on to the westward, towards the main road, stood a heavy wagon, the horse of which was hitched to a tree. Towards this point the youth was carried, and after the wagon had been backed into the road he was lifted into it. Then all three of the men got in, two of them guarding him, while the third drove the horse.

When they reached the main road the horse was turned towards St. Malo, and put into a smart trot. By the time they had arrived opposite the chateau De Montigny it was fairly dark, and Henry could see the lights in the room of the marquis; he looked at the window of a small room in which Isidore sometimes sat, but no light was there. She was in her own apartment upon the garden side, and he was glad of it. And yet what would he not have given to see her then and tell her wherefore he should be missing.

But the chateau was soon passed, and our hero turned his attention to the things about him.

'I fancy you don't like this much,' said the fellow who sat upon his right hand, speaking seemingly from a desire to say something to relieve the monotony of the journey.

'You can imagine yourself in my place, and then fancy what you please,' replied the youth.

'Well, I don't think I should like it; but then you shouldn't have deserted.'

'Let that pass, for you know it is false,' uttered Henry.

'Why, how can it be? You know we are taking you for a deserter, don't you?'

'No.'

'Eh? No? Then what are we taking you for? Answer me that.'

The youth was upon the point of telling him that he believed Arnaud Montfere was at the bottom of the outrage, but his calmer judgment prevailed. The fellow had asked his question very pointedly, and there was that in his tone which betrayed anxiety. Henry thought that if he should betray his mistrust of Montfere his fate might be worse, especially if his suspicions were correct, and he had no doubt they were.

'What do you think we're taking you for, eh?' the fellow asked again, with much eagerness.

'Why, you may think I am a deserter, and that you will get a reward for returning me,' replied the youth, with apparent simplicity.

'Ah, yes, O,' grunted the ruffian, showing plainly enough that he was disappointed in this answer. 'You begin to have your senses.'

Our hero could see that his companions regarded each other with peculiar looks as he gave his answer, for there was light enough to see the countenance of those so near him—and he was glad he had not committed himself.

Just to the southward of the causeway which unites St. Malo to the main land, the horse was turned into the road which leads to the eastward of the city, and as they were now approaching a point where they were liable to meet with travellers the man who seemed to be the leader in the affair turned to the prisoner and said:

'Now look ye, *mon ami*, will you keep your tongue to yourself, or must we clap a stopper on it?'

The youth knew enough to be aware that at present he was entirely at the mercy of his captors, and he was not foolish enough to subject himself to more rough treatment than was necessary. And more, he knew that should he even succeed in arresting the attention of the passer-by, it would avail him nothing, for his captors would swear that he was

a deserter whom they were returning, and that would end it; so he gave his word that he would keep quiet.

'Then see that you do,' returned the leader, in a very significant tone. 'Then see that you do, for if you open your jaw, you'll suffer. Mind that.'

Now all this strengthened Henry in his suspicions. In fact, it made the truth as plain as daylight to his mind that the ruffians had not the least idea that he was a deserter, for if such had been the case, they would not have cared how much he hailed the passers, for they would have nothing to fear, but rather would have expected the support of all well-disposed citizens.

But the prisoner made no disturbance, and consequently he was allowed to remain at his ease, save that the lashing upon his arms was not very comfortable. But he made no complaint of this.

At length the wagon stopped near some old buildings which Henry knew to be fishhouses, and here he was taken out. The horse was hitched to a post, and the prisoner was led down toward the sea, which was not many rods distant, by two of the men, the third remaining to get something out of the wagon. But the other man soon came up and he carried in his hand a long pole, upon the end of which our hero could detect a kind of swab-looking bunch. As soon as they reached the shore, which was rough and rocky in the extreme, he who had the pole proceeded to strike a light upon some tinder which he had placed within the pan of a pistol for that purpose. A match was soon lighted, and in a moment more the swab upon the end of the pole was all in flames, it proving to be a bunch of oakum soaked with pitch and spirits of turpentine. This blazing signal was swung aloft in the air for some moments, and at length our hero saw a like signal suddenly make its appearance far out upon the dark waters of the channel, and then he knew that he was to be carried on shipboard, at all events. But how, and where? The bold, open sea, with its fresh air and its peculiar aroma, had once been to him a source of delight, but he felt it not so now. That gleaming, flashing light in the dark distance seemed like a spectre to which he must bow—an ignis fatuus which he must follow. The grim spirit of death seemed to brood over the waters now, and his heart was sunken and chilled. The light on shore had gone out, and the corresponding signal at sea soon followed it out of existence. Not a word was spoken by the three ruffians, and Henry felt not like asking questions, for he well knew that he should get no answers that would amount to anything. Some fifteen minutes passed, and at the end of that time the youth heard the dip of oars in the distance. The sound came nearer and nearer, until at length the outlines of a boat could be seen close by the shore, and soon afterwards it landed close by where our party stood. There were five men in it—four at the oars, and one at the helm. 'Buffet, is that you?' asked the man who sat at the helm of the boat. 'Yes.' 'Have you got the bird?' 'All safe.' 'Upon that the men in the boat came on shore and Henry Fretart was passed over to them. 'This is the chap,' said the leader of the shore party, 'and you must be responsible for him now. We've done our part of the work.' And never fear that we shall fail to do ours,' returned he of the boat. Thereupon three of the boatmen took the prisoner and lifted him into the boat, while the other two stepped apar

and whispered awhile with the other party. At length the three fellows who had brought the youth thus far returned towards their wagon, and the oars of the boat were once more manned. Henry was placed in the stern-sheets, by the side of the helmsman, and then the boat was shoved off. 'My friend, or whatever you may be,' said our hero, addressing the man who sat by his side, 'will you tell what this all means?'

'Didn't those men tell you?' returned the helmsman, inquisitively. 'They told me I was arrested as a deserter—as a deserter from an English ship. Now I should like to know if you will stick to that?' 'Why, I suppose they knew what you were taken for.' 'But—' 'Never mind asking any more questions now, it won't amount to anything, for I shan't answer questions at present.' This was spoken in a tone which carried conviction with it, and Henry remained silent. At the end of about fifteen minutes our hero saw the tall spars of a brig looming up against the starry sky ahead of him, and ere long afterwards the boat was alongside. The man at the helm went up over the side, and in a few moments he returned. 'Look here,' said he addressing the prisoner, in a stern, threatening tone, 'you are safe here in our custody, and I'm going to cast off the lashing from your arms so that you can work your own way aboard. Now mind—if you make the least resistance, or show the least signs of attempting to escape, we'll kill you just as quick as we would a cockroach. Do you understand?' 'Certainly. You speak plainly enough,' replied Henry. 'And will you mind?' 'I must mind.' 'You'll be wise if you do. So come along.'

The lashing was taken from Henry's arms, and then he took hold of the man-ropes and went up over the brig's side. It was too dark for him to see much of the arrangement of things upon deck, but he could see that there were quite a number of men collected about the gangway, and by the light of a lantern which was hung near the wheel he could see that the gasket of the mainsail was off, and that the sail hung loose in the buntlines. 'This is the individual, captain,' said the fellow who had conducted Henry on board, addressing a man who stood by the mainmast. 'All right. Take him below, and show him his berth.' Accordingly the youth was led below to the cabin, and from here he was conducted into a small state-room which was roughly furnished, and which had the appearance of having been intended for a kind of lock-up in cases of need. There were two bunks in it, and our hero was informed that he could take which he chose. Then his conductor departed—the door was locked, and he was left alone. It was not utterly dark in the little prison-room, for there was a small grated aperture over the door, and through this came some gleams of light from the cabin. Ere long Henry heard the rattle of blocks, and the grating of ropes, and he knew that the brig was being gotten underweigh. He heard the creaking of the windlass, and the clink of the chain—and soon he knew that the anchor had broken ground, and that the craft was in motion. He crept into the lower berth, and then he began to ponder upon his situation. It was truly a startling one, but his mind was more occupied with the future than with the past, for he had an instinctive fear that this was only to end in death. He *knew*—ay, he was morally certain—that the Count Montfere was at the bottom of the business, and that said count desired

his death. This was all plain to him. Is it a wonder that this should lead him to the fear that he had entertained. The brig was now in motion, and as she heeled over to the breeze our hero knew that he was under good headway. But he had yet one gleam of hope; his pistols had not yet been discovered. They were true ones, and he knew that they were faithfully loaded. He clung to them now as his only hope of life.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE NAMELESS. THE SECRET OUT.

THE morning dawned at the chateau de Montigny, and the servants had noticed that Henry Fretart was missing. He had not been to his supper on the night before, but that had not occasioned much inquiry, as he often took supper with his father, though he generally gave notice when such was to take place. Very early—while the sun was not half an hour up—there came a woman to the chateau and inquired for the youth, and when she was informed that he had not been there through the night, she was much moved. It was the same woman who saved Henry's life from Montfere's attempt. She inquired for the marquis, and was informed that he had not yet arisen, but the answer had scarcely been made when De Montigny made his appearance, for he was usually an early riser. 'Philip de Montigny,' spoke the woman, in an anxious tone, 'where is the youth who has been stopping here these few weeks past?' 'In his own apartment, I presume,' replied the marquis, evincing much surprise at the speech and appearance of the woman.

'He has not been here through the night sir. Did he say anything to you about leaving the chateau?' 'Not a word,' replied the old man, seeming more intent upon the woman than upon the subject of her questions. 'Then he has been taken away, sir. Do you not know something that might lead to a clue of how he left?' The woman spoke with such vehemence that the marquis was forced to give some attention to her words. He thought a moment and then he said: 'If he went away intending to remain any time he would have surely told my daughter of it, for he is giving her lessons in drawing. Come into the drawing-room, and I will send for her.'

Isidore was already up and in the garden, and while De Montigny and the woman went into one of the large drawing-rooms a servant went for the maiden. She soon came, and was somewhat startled upon seeing the strange visitor. Those noble, open features, those black, gleaming eyes—that raven hair—that bold form, and that quaint dress, all struck Isidore's mind at once, and she looked upon her in surprise and wonder.

'My child,' said the marquis, 'did Henry Fretart say anything to you about being gone to-day?' 'About being gone—to-day?' uttered the maiden, starting. 'No, sir. He has not gone.' 'Yes, he is. He has not been here since last evening, and this woman wishes to see him.'

'You?' said Isidore, turning to the strange visitor—'you wish to see Henry?' 'Yes, fair lady, for I fear that harm may have befallen him.'

'Harm—befallen Henry!' uttered Isidore, turning pale as death. 'O, no! Who would harm him?' 'He has enemies, lady, who may even seek his life. But did he say nothing to you of going?' 'No, no,' gasped the maiden. 'But when did you see him last?' 'Yesterday afternoon—an hour before sunset.' 'And did you not see him leave the chateau?'

But the poor girl could answer no more. She saw that her interlocutor was fearful of danger, and to her own mind the possibility of Henry's being murdered came with a stunning effect. She uttered a low moan of anguish, and sank into a chair. 'Isidore—my child,' quickly spoke the marquis, advancing and placing his hand upon his daughter's arm, 'what ails you? What has happened?' 'O,' murmured she in reply, seeming unconscious of whom she was speaking, 'save him!—Where is he? O, he must not be injured!' Philip de Montigny was thunderstruck. The truth flashed upon him in an instant, and his face grew pale. 'Let some of the servants be questioned,' said the woman.

But the marquis noticed not what she said. 'The child is frightened,' the woman continued. 'Let her be taken care of by some of her attendants.' 'I am well,' cried Isidore, springing to her feet. 'I am well—think not of me—but let Henry be found.' 'We will make the search,' said the marquis, speaking in a forced tone, and trying to hide the emotion that moved him. 'You may go to your room, Isidore, and we will question some of the servants.' The maiden looked up into her father's face, and as she saw the expression which rested there the thought first came to her that she had betrayed the secret of her love. But she was not ashamed of it, and the fear that the man she loved might be in deadly danger gave new strength to her affection, and new power to her soul. 'Think not of me now,' she said, addressing her father, 'for you can see me at any time, but if Henry Fretart is in danger remember that he saved us when we were in danger.' This remark seemed to start the painful reverie into which he had fallen, and he at once became interested in the fate of the youth, for he was not without gratitude, and if there had been wrong done, perhaps the young tutor was not to blame. He promised that he would do all he could, and then Isidore left the room. The servants were all called in, and from them it was learned that Henry was seen going up the hill back of the chateau about sunset on the previous evening; and the old woodman told of having seen three men lurking about near the edge of the copse. But this was not all. While the consultation was yet going on an old fellow came up from the river with fresh fish for breakfast, and when he was informed of the subject which was then under consideration he gave a bit of testimony that had much bearing upon the case. He said that on the previous afternoon, when he was going down to St. Malo after a new net, he met a wagon with three men in it, and that when he was returning, after dark, he met the same wagon on its way to the city, and that then there were four men in it, and that one of them surely had his arms tied behind him. 'I was on the ground,' resumed the fisherman, 'and I could see the men in the wagon plainly against the open sky, and I thought at the time I had seen that middle one before, and after they had passed me some ways, it came to my mind that he was the same one that I had seen here very often of late.' This was conclusive evi-

dence, and thus far the thing seemed plain, that Henry had been seized and carried off. 'But who could have done it?' inquired the marquis, with much concern. 'No one about here, I'm sure.' 'It was the same man who caused him to be carried on board the English ship,' replied the woman. 'And do you know who it is?' 'I do.' 'Who is it?' 'Never mind now. You shall know soon. I must now hasten off to the city, for this is a business that needs attending to.' 'But one word before you go,' uttered the marquis, earnestly. 'Who and what are you?' 'A woman, sir, who would save an honest youth from the power of the blackest villain that remains unhung.' De Montigny was startled by the vehemence of the woman's answer, and it was some moments before he spoke again. 'I know you are a woman,' he said, 'but I would know more. I have seen you somewhere?' 'Very likely, sir, for I have been seen often.' 'I am not jesting.' 'Nor am I, Philip de Montigny. But if I were to tell you all you ask to know, you might think me jesting truly.' 'Stop, woman!' cried the marquis, as the strange visitor turned away. 'I cannot stop now,' she answered. 'You know I have the most important business on my hands. I thank you for the kindness you have shown me, and I hope at some future time I may be able to return it.' 'But tell me your name?' 'I am NAMELESS, sir, and have been for years!' The woman waved her hand as she thus spoke, and then turned from the apartment. The marquis would have stopped her had he dared, but there was a sort of awe inspired by her manner that kept him back, and in a moment more the mysterious visitor had departed. With quick steps the Nameless made her way towards the city. At the distance of half a mile from the chateau she found a horse, and mounting this she galloped off. In an hour later she was among the rough smugglers of St. Malo, and her business was speedily transacted. It was found that a wagon had driven towards the old fish-houses upon the eastern headland the night before—that a signal had been seen upon the shore, and an answer from a point in the channel where a brig had been laying at anchor, and that the brig was gone now. Shortly after the nameless woman had left the chateau, the Marquis de Montigny sought his daughter. He found her in her own room, and looking very pale and anxious. She looked up when her father entered, and trembled when she saw the stern expression upon his face. 'My child,' he said, sitting down by her side, 'I have come to seek some explanation of a scene that has both surprised and pained me. I would know what meant that sudden effect that was produced by the message of that strange woman?' 'Did I not reason to be moved?' asked the maiden, looking timidly up. 'Not as you were moved then. Now do not attempt to deceive me, Isidore, for it will be of no use.' 'I am not used to deceiving,' returned the fair girl, somewhat proudly. 'I know you are not; but tell me what meant that sudden fright, and subsequent faintness?' 'It was because the fear came to me that Henry Fretart was in danger.' 'But we are not apt to be so affected only for those we love,' said the marquis, eyeing his daughter sharply. Isidore returned her father's look with a troubled expression, and at length she said: 'If you can read causes from their effects, then perhaps you may understand this affair as well as I can explain it. I have no desire to deceive you,

nor will I do it.' 'Do you mean to have me to understand that you love young Fretart?' asked the nobleman, speaking in a tremulous voice, and at the same time regarding his child narrowly. 'I do love him,' she replied, in a very low tone, but yet calmly. 'Ay, you may love him,' added the marquis, with a sudden gleam of hope, 'but how—it is only as a friend. Only as one to whom your deepest gratitude is due. You cannot love the youth with a maidenly affection—with that tender passion which marks the love of two genial hearts.' 'And why should not our hearts be genial?' quickly asked Isidore. 'If you knew Henry perfectly you would know that he has one of the noblest hearts in the world, and that his soul is as pure and elevated as the soul of man can be.' 'Answer me directly: Do you love Henry Fretart so that you would be his wife?' There may have been a moment's hesitation on the maiden's part, for her heart fluttered, and her eyes drooped; but it was only for the moment. She looked up into her father's face, and in a very calm tone she answered: 'You have spoken the truth. I do love the man who saved my life—I love him with my whole soul, and I know of no event in life that could make me happier than a union with him. I have no fault in this. I could no more help loving him than a child can help loving its mother. I exercised no will, no intention in the matter, but my love grew up in my heart as flowers grow in the warm earth after some hand had dropped the seeds. Now you know all. Blame me not; but O, my father, if you love me, and would make me happy, do not crush my heart by tearing away its wildly worshipped idol.' The old man sat there in his chair and gazed upon his child. His hands were clasped together, and his face was pain-stricken and pale, and his eyes burned as though his soul were all on fire. 'My child,' he at length said, in a tremulous tone, 'the worst that I could possibly have feared is revealed to me. Had an angel from heaven told me this, I should not have believed it.' 'My father,' quickly interrupted the fair girl, with much zeal, 'pardon me if I argue with my parent; but you do not speak now with reason. Your better judgment is beclouded by disappointment. Is there anything strange in the fact that I have loved Henry Fretart? Is not the history of our people full of just such facts? Love is not a thing of the will, nor of education, but it is a spirit which springs up in the human bosom under impulses which God alone can govern. When God made the human soul he so fashioned it that it would feel love for all that appeared lovely to it. The heart knows nothing of social standing or rank—the heart has only power to know real worth as it came from the hand of its Maker. I was placed by fate in the company of Henry Fretart, and I could no more have helped loving him, than the bud can help blossoming where there is genial rain and sunshine. Do not blame me, nor do not express wonder at what has happened, for it is all the work of a power above our ability to circumvent, and the doings of which are beyond our control.' De Montigny gazed upon his child, and in his face there were some signs of admiration, for his child had spoken eloquently, and he could not deny the truth, in substance, of what she had said. But yet he was pained and hurt, and his soul was worked upon by the most bitter opposition. And again, at length, there came another faint ray of hope across his face:—And this love is all on your side, for of course the young man has



been more wise than to love so foolishly?' 'And do you think it foolish for one to love your child?' asked Isidore, reproachfully. 'It would be foolish for him to love you, for his love would only be lost upon one so far above him. But no more of that. He does not know that you love him?' 'Unless he disbelieves my words,' replied the girl. And you have told him, then, of your love for him?' uttered the father, in a despairing tone. 'I have, and he has confessed the same to me. I found him one day—only the day before yesterday—in tears, and I asked what made him sad. It was a long time before he would tell me, but when I had urged him much, and when he found from my words that I had a tender sympathy for him, he confessed that he loved me, and that it was the knowledge that his love was hopeless that made him sad. I then told him all, and he told me all, and, under the most holy influence of which the soul is cognizant, I pledged my love to him for life. I can tell you no more. Now, my father, let come what may, your child has not deceived you.' Philip de Montigny arose to his feet, and with nervous strides he commenced to pace the room. His face was flushed, and his lips were set firmly together. At length he stopped and looked down upon his daughter. 'Isidore,' he said, 'I know not what to say to you now. My tongue is not fit for its duty. I must meditate—I must calm myself. But of one thing you may rest assured: The sooner you learn to forget Henry Fretart, the sooner will you be prepared to come back to the enjoyment of life, for I would sooner see you—' He did not finish the sentence, for he had not the will. He saw that his child was turning deadly pale, and he believed his words would pain her still more. He took another turn across the room, and when he came back he resumed, but in a more calm and tender tone—

'We will speak upon this again. Perhaps my words have given you pain, but they cannot have caused half the pain in your bosom that yours have caused in mine, for the things that you have told me have planted a dagger in my soul which nothing but an assurance of your future obedience can take away. Remember that—for I speak truly—I speak most truly.' Isidore did not speak, but she bowed her head and covered her face with her hands. She heard her father's step—she heard the door open and close, and when she looked up again she was alone. She gazed a moment upon the vacant place where she had last seen her father stand, and then she threw herself upon her couch and burst into tears. Her heart was stung to its utmost, and she wept and groaned aloud. The door was softly opened, but she did not hear it; her father looked in, but she did not see him. She groaned in the depth of her anguish, and her tears were as streams upon her fair cheeks. The marquis stood there a moment, and once his lips moved but he did not speak; his whole frame quivered with emotion, and soon the big tears gushed from his own eyes. He stepped one foot over the threshold, for at that moment there came over him a relenting feeling, and had he followed out its impulses he would have rushed in and caught his child to his bosom, and told her to weep no more. But he waited too long. The old phantom of family pride wrapped his soul up again in its cheerless folds, and he softly shut the door and withdrew. And Isidore wept on, and she knew not that her father had seen her. She knew how stern and unrelenting he could be, but she little dreamed how nigh he had just

come towards bidding her follow out her soul's desire and be happy. And it was well that she did not know it, for the double fall would have only made her more miserable.

## CHAPTER XV.

## A THRILLING EPISODE OF OCEAN LIFE.

HENRY FRETART slept but little through the night, yet he slept enough to rest and refresh himself. He knew that the brig had not tacked but twice, and from the way in which she heeled, unless the wind had materially changed, she was sailing in a north-westerly direction. He knew when the watches were relieved at mid night, and at four o'clock in the morning, and he could hear the officers very plainly when they came in and out of the cabin. Every time he awoke he felt to assure himself that his pistols were safe, for upon them he depended for every chance of life that was left, and was careful to so arrange them that they could not be discovered unless his person was searched. He knew when it was daylight, for he found that there was a glass bull's-eye over his head, through which came light enough to enable him to see things quite plainly about his little room. It was eight o'clock before his door was opened. He knew the time by hearing the watch called. 'Well, shipmate, how do you find yourself this morning?' asked the man who opened the door. 'I should like a bit of fresh air,' replied Henry. 'Don't you want some breakfast first?' inquired the man. 'I should like to eat it on deck,' was Henry's answer. 'Well, I'll see.' And so saying the fellow closed the door and went away. In a few moments he returned. 'You may come on deck,' he said, 'but on one condition. You sha'n't speak unless you are spoken to. If you'll mind that you may come.' 'I'll mind it,' said Henry, now used to complying with anything which he could not possibly avoid. 'Then come.' And the fellow led the way out through the cabin, and so up to the deck, the prisoner following close upon his heels. 'There,' said the guide, as he reached the larboard side of the quarter-deck, 'you may wait here, and your breakfast shall be along soon.' Our hero now looked around upon the deck, and he counted eight men in all. They were stout, dark-looking men, and seemed to be all French. The one whom he took to be the captain, and who, after more careful examination, he knew held command, was the most hardened, in looks, of the crew. He was a square-built, burly fellow, somewhere about forty years of age, and deeply poek-marked. The brig had every appearance of being a smuggler, though she had no gun on deck, nor did she appear to have much if any cargo on board. She was a fair sailor, and that was all.

Ere long the man returned with our hero's breakfast, which consisted of a bowl of beef soup and a pot of coffee. Henry found the soup much better in taste than in looks, and he ate much more heartily than he had thought he should. When he had finished the coarse repast a man came and took away the dishes, and after this the youth continued his sur-

vey of the vessel. The sails he found to be old ones, and the rigging was evidently somewhat the worse for wear. The brig was not far from three hundred tons burden, and was certainly of English build. Henry had looked with some curiosity to see if any more men would make their appearance, but as there did not, he concluded that those eight constituted the whole crew. He was leaning up against the rail, when his eye detected a point of land upon the starboard beam, and only about six miles distant. He at once knew it to be the island of Guernsey, and near seventy miles distant from St. Malo. He stood looking upon the distant shore when the captain approached him. 'How do you like your new quarters?' asked the fellow, in a kind of careless, reckless tone, which at once disgusted the youth. 'Of course they do not impress me very favorably,' returned Henry, guardedly. 'No, I don't s'pose they do. You kind o' wish yourself back again, eh?' 'Certainly; and I suppose I may go back before long?' 'Before how long?' queried the captain, with a vulgar leer. 'Why, when it shall have been proved that I am no deserter.' 'O, ah, that idea sticks, does it? Ha, ha, ha. You'll find the road long, I guess. There was something in the fellow's manner that filled the youth's mind with the worst fears, and he came nigh showing his utter disgust; but he controlled himself, and after a moment's pause he said: 'I was told that I was apprehended as a deserter. Is it so?'

'Very likely,' was the laconic reply. 'But you must have had some instructions upon receiving me. Am I not being conveyed now to England?' 'You seem to be going that way.' This fellow was different in his manner from any our hero had yet encountered, and he exhibited his authority in coarseness and brutal badinage. 'Will you tell me, sir, what you do mean to do with me?' asked our hero, with as much respect of manners as he could possibly assume. 'You'll find out in time, my fine bird, so don't be too anxious.' 'Then you will not tell me?'

'I didn't say so,' returned the fellow, with a broad grin, as though he enjoyed the young man's perplexity. A flush came upon Henry's cheek, and his hands were clenched. 'You might act the gentleman, at least, towards one who is completely in your power,' he said, in a low, forced tone. 'Ho, ho—you mean to teach me gentility, eh? Well, I shall be mighty glad to have you, 'cause then, if I should ever chance to meet a gentleman I might know how to behave.' And as the fellow spoke he leered up as though he had said something witty. 'I wish to teach you nothing, save that I am a man, and would like to be treated as such; and furthermore, that I know not yet why I am here, nor what is to be done with me. 'You don't, eh? Well, that's funny. But really, I shan't tell you now. In time, if you keep your eyes open, you may find out.' Henry turned away in utter loathing, and he resolved that he would ask no more questions, but that he would 'keep his eyes open,' and be prepared, if possible, to meet the emergencies that might present themselves. The captain was at that moment called to the binnacle, and in a moment more he gave the order for going about. The wind was now about northwest, and that seemed to be near the course which the brig wished to make, for she tacked and stood off to the westward. About half an hour afterwards the wind fell almost to a calm, and thus it remained during the greater part of the day. At noon Henry received

his dinner as he had done his breakfast, and it consisted of the same, save that he had tea instead of coffee. During the afternoon he spoke not a word to one of the crew, but he noticed that they often spoke of him, for he could see that they pointed furtively towards him during their remarks. They seemed much interested in the matter, if the expression of their countenances was any index to their feelings. Just about supper time there came up a puff of wind, but it lasted only a few moments, and then the sails flapped against the masts again. 'It's too bad,' said the captain, with an oath, as his eyes wandered off to the southern and eastern horizon. 'Now the wind is blowing where we came from, I know. Don't you see how heavy and blowy it looks off there?' This was addressed to one who seemed to be the second in command, and he gave it as his opinion also that the wind was still quite fresh to the southward. 'Yes,' pursued the captain, 'there's certainly a land breeze there, and it just cuts a streak right out to sea. I'd like to see a bit of it.' Before dark Henry was politely informed that he might turn in, and he obeyed without a word of questioning or remonstrance. During no part of the night did Henry sleep so soundly but that the slightest sound would awake him, and he knew from the vessel's motion, and from the flapping of the sails, that there was but little wind. In the morning he was aroused by an unusual bustle upon deck, and he soon found, from the words he could occasionally hear, that there was a sail in sight. It was again eight o'clock before our hero was disturbed, and this time his breakfast was brought down to him. He asked if he might not eat it on deck, and was answered that he might not; and with that the man shut the door and bolted it. Of course this movement struck the youth as being curious, to think the least, and he wondered what it meant. He examined his pistols, opened the pans and looked to the priming, and being assured that they were all right, he proceeded to eat his breakfast, which was this time a sort of hash, and very palatable. He ate it all, for his appetite was keen, and when he had done he laid the dishes down, and then sat down upon the edge of the lower bunk.

In this way he sat fully an hour, and at the end of that time his door was again opened, and the same man who had brought his food down made his appearance. There was something in the fellow's countenance that bespoke an anxious feeling, and the thought at once struck the youth that some kind of a point was about to be made. He followed the man on deck, and his first movement, when he reached it was, to look for the sail he had heard reported. He naturally looked astern, and there he saw it, not more than half a mile distant. It was a brig, under full sail, and dashing through the water at a rapid rate. The wind had come out fresh from the east, and both brigs had their starboard studding-sails set, though it required but a moment for our hero to see that the strange brig was by far the best sailor. Henry looked around upon the crew, and he saw that they were all of them nervous. The captain was conversing with his men, and they all seemed to have made their minds up to some point which had been under consideration.—There were only four men, with the helmsman, conversing with the captain. Henry's guide made the sixth. Where were the other two? Surely they ought to be on deck if there was anything of importance going on—at least, so thought the prisoner. But just as his mind was



dwelling upon this point the other two men came up from the hold, and each of them had a heavy pig of iron in his arms! They carried them forward upon the larboard side, which was also the lee side, and there Henry saw them make fast two stout, strong lashings to each of the iron pigs. What could that mean? At any rate there came a blanch spot upon the youth's cheek as he saw it, for he knew, from all he could see, that all this had reference to him. At length the two men arose from their work and came aft. 'It's all ready captain,' said one of them. 'The lashings are strong?' asked the commander. 'Yes.' 'Will they sink quick?' the captain continued; and as he asked the question every eye shot towards the prisoner. He noticed it, and knew full well what the diabolical plot meant. 'They'll sink like a hundred pounder,' was the reply to this last question. The captain nodded his head, and then turned towards the youth. The coming brig was now not more than a quarter of a mile distant, and was gaining rapidly. She fired a gun to the leeward, and as the report came booming over the water one of the men said: 'We've no time to lose, captain. That fellow'll overhaul us before long, and we must have a clear deck when he comes.' 'We'll do it quick enough,' returned the captain; and then turning again to our hero he continued: 'Now, my hearty, just step forward, and we'll show you something.' Henry's heart leaped to his mouth, but he quickly overcame the weakness, and with a resolute step he followed the captain to the fore-castle. 'Now what will you show me?' he asked in a hushed voice, backing around as he spoke, so as to bring all the men in front of him. 'Why, we'll just show you how fast iron can sink,' returned the captain with a wicked leer. 'It's been a question with the shore-going gentry how swift iron can travel downward in salt water, and we're going to try the experiment, and for the sake of having a correct report we'll send you along with it. So just prepare yourself. *Now is the time. At him, and over he goes!*' The men made a simultaneous movement towards the youth. They moved up confidently, for they were seven against one, the eighth man being at the helm. On the instant Henry Fretart felt every nerve and muscle in his body strained, and his cords were like iron. With one bound sideward and backward he reached the heel of the bowsprit, and moving quickly back as far as the stem he drew both his pistols, cocked them in a twinkling, and then aimed them at the astounded crew. 'Ha, ha, ha,' he bitterly laughed, 'you are a pretty set of fools! Now move a step near me if you dare! The first man who does it dies on the spot! I am not so easily disposed of as you may imagine!' It was a moment of strange suspense, and the only sound that broke upon the air was the straining of the sails, and the dashing of the water. At the end of that moment came the boom of another gun from the pursuer. Then broke forth the curses loud and long from the lips of the exasperated captain, and the weight of the malediction rested upon those who had first captured the prisoner and not taken his pistols away from him. There stood those seven men, and the muzzle of two pistols stared them in the faces. They knew that the first one of them who should move a step towards the bowsprit would die. 'Let us rush together!' yelled the captain, and as he spoke he made a spring. He reached the heel of the bowsprit, and then he fell back with a ball through

his brain! 'Who comes next?' cried Henry, instantly changing pistols, so as to bring the loaded one into the right hand. But no one else seemed inclined to move. There was a ball still left, and that was sure death to the first man who should move, and not one of the six now left desired to be the first man. At that instant there came a round shot ploughing through the weather quarter-rail. It took the foot of the mainsail in its course, passed to the leeward of the foremast, and struck one of the men in the breast, tearing him in pieces, and scattering his torn flesh and blood all about. This was a settler, and in another moment the men rushed aft and, after a moment's consultation they hove the brig to, and then one of them returned to the fore-castle. 'Don't fire,' he said, addressing our hero, 'for I don't mean you harm. We were only obeying our captain, and he would have killed us if we hadn't. Don't expose us. Let all pass and you shall be richly repaid. Our captain was a brute, but we didn't mean to harm you. Don't expose us.' Henry was amused at the fellow's abject servility, but before he could make any reply the pursuer had rounded-to under their lee quarter, and thrown their grapplings, and on the next moment *Montmorillon* leaped upon the deck. Our hero took one look to assure himself that he was not mistaken, and then he sprang aft. He caught the smuggler by the hand, but his joy was too great and too sudden for him to speak, but *Montmorillon* found his tongue on the instant. 'Henry, my dear boy!' he cried, 'I have found you safe and well! God be blessed! God be blessed!' He opened his arms as he spoke, and caught the youth to his bosom. Henry instinctively laid his head upon the strange man's shoulder, and in his soul he felt that he had a home in the smuggler's heart. He did not then stop to ask himself questions. He only blessed God that the bold man had come to save him.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE FORCED WITNESS.

THE six men who were left of the ruffian crew were huddled together upon the starboard side of the quarter-deck, and they looked with astonishment upon the scene that was transpiring before them. The appearance of *Montmorillon* upon their deck had struck them dumb with fear and trembling, and they cowered before him as the whipped cur cowers before its master; but when they saw him open his arms and take their late prisoner to his bosom, they were astounded. 'Henry,' spoke the smuggler, as soon as he could find tongue for questions, 'what means all this? Why were you up there upon the bowsprit? What pistol was that I heard, and the one you had in your hand? Tell me?' Henry did not hesitate, for he had seen enough to convince him that his friend knew all the villains, and he told all that had transpired about the iron pigs, the lashings, the threat, the leap upon the heel of the bowsprit, and the shooting of the captain. And by a few questions from *Montmorillon* he was led to tell the whole story of his seizure

upon the hill, and his being carried to St. Malo. After he had told his story Montmorillon, took a step towards the men who were yet huddled together to windward, and for some moments he gazed upon them in stern silence. They trembled before him, and showed plainly that they were nervous and fearful. 'Maton,' he said, addressing one who seemed to have been the second in command, 'will you tell me what all this means?' But the fellow was too much affrighted to answer. Montmorillon drew a pistol. 'Now,' said he, 'you had better speak, tell me what all this means?' 'All what, good captain,' tremblingly uttered the terrified coward. 'This seizing of my young friend here, and treating him as you have done?' 'O, Montmorillon, it wasn't our fault,' stammered the fellow. 'We couldn't help it. Rougisse did all the business.' 'And Rougisse is killed?' 'Yes sir. The young man shot him.' 'Served him right. And now,' added the strange man, lowering his tone to a terrible meaning, and speaking very slowly, 'if you do not answer every question I put to you and answer them truly, you shall be hung at the yard-arms of your own brig. If Rougisse did truly do all this business, and you were doing his bidding in what you did—and furthermore, if you will answer me truly—you shall not suffer, but I will overlook all; provided, however, that you will swear never to be engaged in such a work again.' 'O, good captain,' uttered Maton, clasping his hands, 'it was all the doing of Rougisse—certainly—and we will never be led into such a scrape again.' 'Very well. Now tell me who is at the bottom of this plot?' 'Rougisse. He did truly.' 'Ah; but I mean who hired him?' The man hesitated. 'Answer me!' whispered Marco Montmorillon, in a terrible tone. 'It was—the—the—Count Arnaud Montfere.' 'So I supposed,' returned the smuggler, while a twitching of the facial muscles showed that he had more emotion than he exhibited. 'And now tell me how you know it was he?' Maton's tongue was loosened now, for he seemed to have got over the only point upon which he was bound by any oath, and he quickly replied: 'The Count Montfere came to St. Malo, and saw Rougisse and me together, and he made a bargain with the captain to take Henry Fretart and carry him off.' 'Then he made all the bargain with Rougisse, did he?' 'Yes sir, every bit of it.' 'Very well. Now tell me how you were to get possession of the young man?' 'He was to be brought to the shore for us at a certain time, and a signal made.' 'So. And who was to bring him?' 'I don't know.' 'And who did bring him?' 'Upon my word, I don't know, only I think they were beach-combers or foot-pads, and one of them was named Buffet.' 'Very well. Then the bargain was made with your captain, and Arnaud Montfere was to pay him?' 'He did pay him—paid him in advance; and then was to pay him more when the work was done. He paid fifty English guineas down, and promised to give twenty more when he could—or when Rougisse, could prove that the job was done.' 'Now tell me what you was a going to do with the prisoner? No lying, now, but tell me just what Montfere asked you to do?' 'He wanted the youngster killed!' 'And did he tell you why?' 'Yes. He said he had two reasons. He said, in the first place, that the boy had cheated him out of a deed of a lot of his property at a gambling table, which he law would force him to pay if Fretart was not removed; and in the

next place, he said that Fretart had once already tried to shoot him upon the highway.' At this juncture Henry stepped forward and attempted to speak. His face was flushed with indignation, and his hands were clutched nervously. 'Never mind now, my boy,' interrupted Montmorillon. 'What that dastard count has said, is not worth the contradicting, for it can do no harm now.' And then turning to Maton again, he continued: 'Now tell me exactly what you meant to do with your prisoner?' 'Why,' returned the fellow somewhat embarrassed, but yet speaking like one who meant to tell the truth, 'we hadn't fully made up our minds. Rougisse was for killing him at once, but we wouldn't let him. The fact is we never did kill a man right out in cold blood, and it came rather hard. In fact, there were a good many opinions as to what we should do. Rougisse said kill him at once. Throw him overboard. But the boy had never harmed us, and we couldn't agree to it right off. Some said, 'Let's fix him somehow, so that he shall fall overboard accidentally.' That was good but not so easily done. Well, last night we had about made up our minds to fix the matter in this way: We were to fix eight little papers, exactly alike, and in seven of them we were to put flour, and in one, arsenic. Then we meant to put the papers into a hat, each man draw out one and empty it into the pan of soup without looking at it, and when they were all in to stir it up, and give it to him. In this way he would be poisoned, and no one would know who did it.' Henry shuddered as he heard the recital of this precious plot, for he felt sure that he should have eaten the soup without mistrust. 'You were a bright set of fellows I must confess,' said Marco, with a bitter sneer. 'But you didn't carry out your plan, it seems.' 'No. When daylight came this morning we saw a sail astern, and before long we were sure we were chased. We held a consultation on the subject, and we concluded that we were chased because we had the youngster on board, and after a while we agreed to get rid of him as soon as possible, and then of course to swear that that we had never seen him, and knew nothing about him. We agreed to lash two heavy pigs of iron to his feet, and then sink him over the bows, and that we tried to do.' 'But you found you had seized upon the wrong man,' added Montmorillon, with a smile of irony. 'However you did all you could towards it, and so you ought to have your reward.' 'You won't harm us, captain?' 'Not now. I shall wait and see how you behave. I am going to take the man on board my own brig, and you may go where you please.' 'But haven't you got a cargo for us to put through?' asked Maton, earnestly. 'We will put it ashore safe.' 'No, I have none now.' 'But you will have. You will not cast us off. You will give us a cargo when you get one?' 'Yes, when I have one to send, and cannot carry it myself. I will let you know; but you must not depend too much upon me. I have made almost enough money at the business.' 'I thought you told me some time ago you hadn't saved much.' 'Neither have I, but I have earned a great deal. Yet I have it laid up in human hearts. You will find my money in little homes of peace, and plenty all along the coast, from Cherbourg to Brest. I have invested it in human happiness, and I know that there are a thousand doors in France which would almost fly open of their own accord at my approach, and a thousand hearts and roofs that are mine for protection

and shelter. So I shall not want, even if I give up my business to-day. 'Yes I know,' muttered Maton, thoughtfully. 'I know you have had a faculty of making friends by looking out for other people's good. I suppose there are a good many doors in France that would almost instantly fly open of themselves at my approach—but they are all prison doors!' This was not spoken lightly, but it was spoken with deep feeling, for at that moment Maton seemed to realize what a graceless dog he was. However, Montmorillon did not stop to hear any more, but once more bidding the desolate crew to run their vessel where they pleased, he turned to Henry and bade him follow. The youth went and picked up his two pistols, and then followed his mysterious friend on board the other brig. As soon as they were both on board the grapplings were cast off, and then the sails were filled, the helm put up, and in a few minutes more the two vessels were at some distance apart.—Henry watched the movements of the six men he had just left, and he saw that they were still huddled together upon the quarter-deck in earnest consultation. It was some minutes before they filled away, and when they at length did so they stood on in the direction they had been sailing, but Montmorillon had his vessel put directly back to St. Malo. Our hero now found himself on board a craft very different in appearance from the one he had left. The deck was as white as native wood could be, the metal work all polished and bright, the rigging all in order and coiled neatly away, the sails in excellent condition, and the crew looking like men. To be sure there were some rough looking men on board, but none of them looked like villains. They all seemed, as in truth they really were, a set of hardy, good-natured, seamen. There were twenty-six in all, and they were very neatly dressed, and scrupulously clean. Marco Montmorillon would not have a dirty looking man on deck. There were four guns on board, mounted upon stout carriages, and of different sizes. Two aft were 'medium eighteen,' and the two forward were 'long' ones of the same calibre. 'I hope you will not think that I have been in the habit of keeping such company as that,' said Montmorillon, as he came and stood by the youth's side, and at the same time pointed off to the other brig, which was now at some distance. 'The whole truth is,' he continued, 'those fellows are good seamen, and I have often employed them to run cargoes for me to England, for I have often had more than I could possibly carry myself, and which it was necessary I should run across as soon as possible. I have no doubt that I have kept them out of worse business.' Henry acknowledged that such a conclusion was reasonable, and after some further remarks on the characters of the men they had just left, he asked: 'How happened you to fall so opportunely upon my track?' 'I will tell you; very early yesterday morning word was brought to me that you was missing from the chateau, and that you had been traced to the old fish-houses to the eastward of the city. The two signals were seen, and I knew from the description I received of the signal light out in the channel, that it must have been made on board Rougisse's brig. I also learned of the encounter you had with Montfere upon the de Vaux road, and by putting all the pieces of evidence together, I made myself sure that you had been taken away by the brig. My own vessel lay in a little snug cove in the Cancele Bay, and mounting a swift horse I set out and

before nine o'clock I had all sail set. I knew that the chase was a poor sailer, and I hoped to overhaul her. And I furthermore felt assured that she would sail as had been her wont for the Irish Channel. And you see, I was right.' 'Thank God you were,' the youth ejaculated, fervently, 'for I should not have lived much longer. But who was it that brought you the news of my disappearance?' 'Why do you ask?' asked the smuggler. 'Because I suspect who it was.' 'And whom do you suspect?' 'A woman.' 'You are right.' 'My mother!' Henry whispered, looking eagerly, wishfully, imploring up. 'Your what?' returned Montmorillon, in apparent amazement. 'My mother. O, was it not—is it not so?' 'Why, what mad freak have you got into your head? That woman your mother? Bless my soul, did I not have indubitable proof that you were in your right senses, I should think you minus your reason. What put such an idea into your head? How did you get it?' 'From my soul. My own soul told me she was my mother. Her face, her form, her eyes, her smile—' 'Did you see her smile?'

'Yes, yes—and it was when she smiled that she showed me the ideal of my heart's fondest, wildest dream. Do not dispel the dream now. Do you not know the woman?' 'Ay, I know her well,' returned Marco, and as he spoke he wiped a teardrop from his eye. 'And is she not an honorable, virtuous woman?' 'As pure as the cloudless heavens,' answered the smuggler. 'She is my mother! Do you not know that she is?' 'I should have to study some before I could answer such a question, Henry. I did not expect it—I was not looking for such a thing. But you should have asked her. I did ask her—I did ask her, but she would give me no answer direct in words. But she kissed me and she wept over me. Her tears yet tremble and burn upon my cheek. You know her you know her well. Then why can you not tell me?' 'Because I know her well, that is no proof that I should know all her relations in life.' 'But her name—do you know that?' 'I have not heard her speak her name for years. She is *Nameless*.' Henry was lost in a maze of doubt and anxiety. He felt sure that the smuggler knew more than he was willing to divulge, and that he was keeping back what he knew for some purpose of his own. Yet his belief that he had seen his mother was not shaken.

## CHAPTER XVII.

AN UNEXPECTED GLEAM IN A DARK PLACE.

It was not far from midnight when the vessel in which our hero had found safety ran into her berth upon the western shore of Cancele Bay, and by one o'clock both Montmorillon and Henry had procured horses, and were on their way to St. Malo. They passed the city to the southward and kept on direct for Pierre Fretart's cot, which they reached about three. The old man was easily aroused, and when he found who were his visitors he leaped up for joy like a child. He embraced his dear boy a hundred times, and every time he made his demonstration he blessed the smuggler. But Montmorillon could not remain to keep them company long. 'I have business,' he said, 'which must be attended to, and I must be on the road. I shall see you, Henry, before long, and

in the meantime you must be more careful. Do you mean to return to the chateau? 'Certainly,' returned the youth, apparently surprised at the question, 'I have an engagement there. I shall return early in the coming day.' 'Then you had better keep your horse for the tramp. You can have him taken care of there?' 'Yes. There is plenty of room in the stables of the marquis, and there will be no objections to my occupying some of it.' 'Then you may keep the horse as long as you please. I cannot say exactly when I shall see you again, but it will surely be before long. All is, beware of danger, and keep your eyes about you, and, if I mistake not, your future may yet be bright and joyous. At any rate, I do not think it will be any darker than has been your past. I shall hear from you when you know it not. Be careful now, and God bless you.' As the smuggler thus spoke he put on his cap and left the cot. Neither Pierre nor his child attempted to stop or detain him, and in a few moments more the hoofs of his horse were rattling in the distance.

'Father,' spoke Henry, when the sound of the hoofs could be heard no more, 'What can you make of that man? What do you know of him?'

'O, my boy, do not ask me,' returned Pierre, nervously. 'I was going to ask you the same question. Don't you know anything of him?' 'Nothing, father. I can learn nothing, as sure as I am alive am I that he has some mysterious connexion with me. Don't you know anything?'

'No. I have racked my poor brains about him, but all to no purpose. I can make nothing of him, though I know him as well as I know you.'

'Know him?' uttered Henry, elevating his eyebrows. 'Yes, I know him. He is just as familiar to me as the face of my own self in the glass, and I can't think where or when I have seen him. By the power of Jupiter, it makes me mad with myself every time I think of it; but it's no use. The more I try to think the more I can't.' 'So it is,' murmured our hero, bowing his head; and after a moment's thought he said, 'But, father, there is one other thing I would speak of. I have seen a woman. The old man's countenance changed in an instant. He gazed full into the youth's face, and his lips trembled. 'There has been a woman here, my boy,' he said. 'She came here about daylight on the morning that you were first missed at the chateau, and she went from here to de Montigny's place.' 'She was a tall woman,' said the youth, anxiously. 'Yes.'

'With black eyes, and black hair, and a noble countenance, and sundarpened features, and a bold step, and a quaint dress.' 'Yes.' 'And do you know her?' 'I do, enry. 'Who is she?' asked our hero, stooping anxiously forward. 'She is the same woman who brought you to this very cot long, long years ago. She has altered, but such faces as hers do not change much. She was beautiful then, and she has only grown more solid since. There is no mistake about it, my dear boy—she is the same, same, self-same woman—the woman that I saw weep over you, and call you her 'darling,' her joy, and her 'dear, dear child.' 'I knew it,' murmured Henry, in a whisper, clasping his hands and raising them towards heaven. 'O, great God of mercy, spare my mother to me as thou lovest thy fond and trusting children! O, give her back to me, and so shalt thou make me happy in thy bounty.' And old Pierre said 'Amen.' On the following morning, very early, our hero ate his breakfast, and then set out for the chateau, having promised old Pierre that he would be more careful in future how he exposed himself.

Henry passed into the main hall, as he generally did, and the first person whom he met in the building was Isidore. She uttered a low, wild cry as she saw him, and without stopping to remember the paternal advice she had received she sprang to his embrace. There was a wild thrill in his soul as he received this proof of her unchanged love, and all thoughtless of the publicity of the place, he wound his arms about her. 'O, thank God you are safe!' the maiden murmured, as she threw back her head and gazed up into her lover's face. 'Ah, Isidore,' fervently returned the happy youth, 'my escape from a terrible death, at the moment when salvation came, gave me not half the joy that this pledge has imparted to my soul. Bless you, dearest, bless you. You are glad to see me safe once more.' 'O, I cannot tell you how glad,' murmured the maiden, and as she spoke she pillowed her head again upon her lover's bosom. At that moment there came the sound of a footfall upon their ears, and upon turning they beheld the marquis only a few feet from them. He was startled as much as they and seemed evidently as ill at ease. Isidore uttered a low cry and clung upon the youth's arm, while Henry seemed trying to find his scattered thoughts. The marquis was the first to break the silence. 'I saw you coming, sir,' he said, addressing our hero with a most chilling politeness; 'and I meant to have been the first to meet you; but it seems I have been forestalled. If you will follow me this way, sir, you will oblige me.' 'Farewell—I am yours,' whispered Isidore, in a gasping tone. Fretart was bewildered. He saw the pain marks upon the fair girl's face, but he could not stop to ask a question, for the marquis waited for him, and he followed him. De Montigny led the way to his own library and when Fretart had entered he closed the door. He did not invite his guest to a seat, nor did he take one himself. He had grown calm now, but it was a cold, chilling, forbidding calm. 'Henry Fretart,' he said, in carefully measured tones, 'there is no need that I should enter into any explanation with you. What I have witnessed just now is sufficient to warrant all that need be said. I do not blame you, sir, for anything that has transpired; but I would ask you what will be the amount that will satisfy you for the trouble you have already taken in teaching drawing lessons to my child?' The youth was not so blind but that he saw in an instant the whole meaning of the marquis, and the chilling coldness with which he had been thus received served to arouse a spirit of pride within him. 'If I understand you rightly,' he replied, in a tone as polite as could have been raised in a royal court, 'you allude to some compensation for my services?' 'Exactly,' returned the marquis, betraying some surprise, for he probably thought the youth would tremble and stammer. 'I did not engage my services with any such understanding, Sir Philip. I was to find a home here so long as you wished me to give instructions to your child.' 'And how have you instructed her, sir?' the old man exclaimed bitterly. 'To the best of my ability, sir.' 'O, and in what have you instructed her? You have stolen away her young affections—you have—' 'Stop, stop, Sir Philip,' interrupted the youth, while a flush of deeper pride mantled his handsome features. 'You speak hastily now, and without judgment. You commenced by informing me that you did not blame me. I know the point of your allusion. You mean that I have learned to love your sweet child, and that she has returned my love. I could not

help it, sir. I fought against the spirit with all my power—I pledged myself that I would not allow her sweet image to become imprinted upon my heart—I tried to fortify myself against the possession; but while I worked the hardest the subtle spirit crept in. And even then I would have kept it to myself, and would have fled from the place, but fate would not let me. In an hour when I could not help it, I confessed my love—not to draw its object towards me—but only to tell her why I was sad, and why I must flee from her. And in that hour, sir, she confessed her love for me. O, I could not go then. I could have laid down my life, but I could not have torn out my heart and flung it away now that the heavenly impress was upon it. But let it pass now. You can turn me from your doors, but do not blame me. I am used to being driven about at the will of a stern, cold fate—I am used to knowing enemies, too—so I shall not be suffering for the first time.' The marquis gazed into the face of the youth, and his lip trembled. He was moved—much moved, by what he had heard, for there was something in the manner and tone of the speaker that was not common. And then his face, too, carried such a weight of power in its truthful and manly yet melancholy expression. 'Did you say you had enemies?' the marquis at length asked. 'Do not the events of the past two days prove it, sir?' returned Henry, with a tone of sadness. 'They do, surely. And who can be an enemy to you?' The young man hesitated. His first impulse was to keep his own counsel, but other thoughts came to him. Arnaud Montfere was intimate there, and the suspicion had found its way to the mind of the youth that de Montigny would give the hand of his fair child to the count. Henry knew the marquis to be an honorable man, and at length he resolved to tell him all, and he did so. He told of the suspicions he had entertained—how Montfere had met him on the road—what had then transpired—the events of his transit to the brig—and the revelation which the smuggler, Maton, had made. He told all—all that he knew, and when he had closed, the marquis sat—for he had taken a seat—like one astounded. 'Sit down,' he said addressing the youth; and after Henry had taken a seat he continued: 'You say a woman saved you from the death which the count meant for you on the road?' 'Yes, sir.' 'It must have been the same who came here to inquire for you. 'It was the same, sir, for Montmorillon informed me that it was she who hunted the evidence up.' 'Yes,' said Montigny, now much interested. 'And who is the woman?' The youth hesitated again, but it was only for a moment. He looked up, and while a tear glistened in his eye, he said: 'She is my mother!' 'How do you know?' the old man asked, vehemently. 'Did she tell you so?' 'No, sir—she would tell me nothing. But she embraced me, and kissed me, and wept upon my neck. And Old Pierre Fretart says she is the same woman who left me with him many years ago. But I have a higher proof still,' continued Henry, with increased emotion. 'It is the voice of my own heart—the memory of my own soul—the power of my own love!' 'By my soul, she is your mother!' de Montigny exclaimed, with much energy. 'Your face shows it. It must be so.' Henry was considerably surprised at the manifest interest of his host, and he wondered again. His sources of wonder were many. It was some time before either of them spoke again, for the marquis was very busy with

his own thoughts, and the youth was plodding along in a vague maze. 'But this Montmorillon—' suddenly spoke Sir Philip, looking up, 'Who is he?' 'I do not know, sir. I can get nothing from him, save that at some time he may reveal to me the secret of his life. He is all mystery to me.' 'Is he interested about this affair of the count's?' 'Yes, sir. That seems to be his whole aim at present.' 'Does he mean to bring Montfere immediately to justice?' 'I should think not, sir. As near as I can judge from what he has said in my presence, he has some secret power over the count—some power by which he can unmask him at any time, but seems only to be waiting for some further event.' 'Yes, yes, I see—I see,' murmured the marquis, arising from his chair and commencing to pace the floor. And he walked up and down the room for full five minutes, during which time he spoke not a word. At length, however, he sat down, and said: 'Upon my soul, this is all very strange;' and then he relapsed into thought again. 'My lord,' spoke Henry, after another pause, 'let us resume the business that brought us here, for I suppose you would have me understand you at once, and having understood you, to act upon it. I am not so blind, sir, but that your words and manner have already conveyed to me your full meaning, and there is no need that you should pain me by saying more; for, poor though I be, yet I have a heart as susceptible of pain as your own. I know it was a wild, mad freak, but it was not a fault, though it must ever be to me a lasting source of anguish. Farewell, and may—' The youth had nerved himself with all his strength, but he could not bear up. The last word stuck in his throat, and while he tried in vain to speak it he burst into tears. He turned quickly towards the door as if to hide his heart-flood, and his hand was upon the latch.

'Stop, stop,' uttered the marquis. 'I have not yet bid you leave my house.' Henry looked around in surprise. 'Your words surely meant it, sir,' he said. 'Perhaps they did, for I knew not then how unfortunate you had been. Take a seat again, sir. I will not send you from me.' 'But I had better go, sir.' 'Why?' 'How can you ask me that question? Can I stop here, and be near your child, and be anything but miserable?' 'But I thought love made people happy.' 'Sir!' gasped the youth, sinking into a chair, and turning pale. 'I do not understand you. You would not trifle with me. What can you mean?' 'I mean that you may remain here, Henry, for the present—that you may try and comfort my child if you can, for I know she is very miserable. I saw her the other day weeping and sobbing as though her heart would break because I had told her that she should never be your wife. Go and comfort her, and remain here a while longer. Mind—I do not say that she shall ever be yours—I do not bind myself under any promise; but for the present you will both be happier together. But you need not fear as it is—for rather than see her heart-broken, I would give you her hand and bless her still. There—go now, for I will not answer a single question. As God is my judge, I will not. Come, come, Isidore is all this while crying in such anguish as you began to feel a few moments since, only she suffers more than you can begin to suffer.' As the marquis thus spoke he brushed a tear from his eye, and then left the apartment.



## [CHAPTER XVIII.

## A MYSTERIOUS TRANSACTION.

THE Chateau de Vaux, which the Count Arnaud Montfere now owned and occupied, was in truth one of the most noble structures in the north of France. Though built of solid masonry, yet it had an air of lightness and refinement that might vie with the most fastidious architecture of the Moors. It was large and roomy, and divided into wings, turrets, porches, porticos, piazzas, verandahs and arches with the most exquisite skill and taste. Many people came some distance out of their way from the Ille road to see the Chateau de Vaux, and none ever seemed to be disappointed in the result of their trouble, for the place was worth seeing. If there ever was trouble it was nothing more nor less than envy in the bosom of the visitor, for men very comfortably situated in life might well envy Arnaud Montfere the possession of his fine estate. It was on the same morning that saw Henry Fretart on his way from the sea-side cot to the chateau of de Montigny. Montfere was in his library, and one of the valets had just taken away his breakfast of hot sandwiches and hot punch. The place was well furnished with books, but they none of them had the appearance of having been used lately. The count sat in his great chair—a chair which bore upon its heavily carved back an escutcheon which was not his—and before him lay an open letter. It was one he had received the evening previous from the capital, and his countenance betrayed anything but an easy frame of mind. However, the contents of the letter did not seem to frighten him—they only made him more proud and confident, and caused him to clutch his hands with a more fixed determination. Thus he sat when there came a rap upon his door, and in a moment afterwards a servant entered, who informed the count that there was a man below, who wished to see him. ‘Who is he?’ asked Montfere. ‘I never saw him before, sir, unless he is the same man who came here one evening about a week ago.’ ‘Let him come up, quickly uttered the count, in an anxious tone. The servant withdrew, and ere long a stout, rough-looking man entered the library. He was the man who had been leader of the trio that seized Henry Fretart and carried him off in the wagon. ‘Ah, Buffet,’ uttered the count. ‘I have been waiting for you.’ I have heard that the youngster is missing very mysteriously from the chateau de Montigny. Do you know anything about it?’ ‘Yes,’ returned Buffet. There was a shade of perplexity upon his face, but he soon overcame it, and then continued: ‘I did your bidding to the letter, and delivered the youngster safe into the hands of the good Captain Rougisse; and what is more, I saw him put on board the boat, saw the boat put off, and saw the brig away. I have done my part, and now I’ve just come to see if you’ll do yours.’ ‘You are out early.’ ‘Because my wants are urgent.’ ‘Well, I suppose I might as well pay you now as at any time, for I do not think Rougisse will let the boy come back again.’ ‘You may depend upon it the youngster is dead before this time.’ ‘You do not think they will kill him?’ uttered the villanous count, with ill-assumed surprise. ‘O, no. Of course you wouldn’t have him killed!’ retorted Buffet, with complete sarcasm. ‘I should hope not,’ answered the count, lowering his eyes before the keen gaze of the man before him. ‘But now about the money. You

remember the amount?’ ‘Twenty guineas.’ ‘Only ten.’ ‘Ten for me, and five apiece for the other two, makes twenty. I will see that they have it, for they are both waiting for me now at the very place where you and I were to meet.’ ‘Very well,’ said Montfere; and as he spoke he drew out his purse. There was not enough in it, and he bade Buffet wait while he went to get it, and as he spoke he arose and left the library. ‘By our lady,’ muttered the fellow, as soon as he was left alone, and at the same time sitting down, for he had been all this while standing—‘we shall get our money after all. But wont he swear and dance when he finds that the bothering youngster has come back again! But how in the name of wonder could Rougisse have let the fellow escape?’ Buffet chanced to be on the road an hour before, near St. Malo, and he had seen Henry Fretart upon the back of a horse steering direct for the chateau de Montigny. He lost no time in hastening to obtain his pay for the labor he had performed, before Montfere should learn of the youth’s return. How Henry had got back he could not guess, nor did he try to. The gold was his first object. Ere long the count returned and counted out the twenty guineas, and without stopping for further remark Buffet took his leave.—Montfere had no desire to converse further, for he could not look the man in the eye whom he had hired to do a wicked deed. After Buffet had gone, the count sat down again at his table, but he did not remain long undisturbed, for in a very few minutes his valet came again and informed him that there were three men below who wished to see him. Montfere went down, and found his visitors in the drawing-room, and a tremulousness was manifest in his frame as he saw them. One of these visitors was none other than Marco Montmorillon, but the count only knew that he had seen him often in St. Malo, and that the strange man had always eyed him with more than ordinary intent. The other two were officers of the government and wore the badges peculiar to the officials of the national police. Montfere knew that badge in an instant, and as he saw how sombre and sedate the wearers looked, his mind was filled with apprehension. ‘Gentlemen,’ said the count, as soon as he could find his tongue, ‘to what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?’ His voice faltered as he closed, for he caught the eye of Montmorillon, and there was something in that deep, dark eye that moved him strangely—that had always moved him so whenever he had seen it. ‘Arnaud Montfere,’ returned one of the officers, ‘we have orders to search your chateau under the guidance of this man,’ pointing to Montmorillon; ‘and we will proceed to do so at once.’ ‘Search my chateau?’ uttered the count, turning pale. ‘Orders to search? And who do you expect to find?’ ‘O, no one in particular. We are after no prisoner.’ ‘But what authority? Who has empowered you to this thing? Are you aware upon whose premises you have come?’ ‘I am the owner here, sir, and a noble of the kingdom. Who dares to authorize this?’ ‘You will see his seal and signature here,’ answered the officer with a smile, at the same time showing a small parchment roll. The count looked upon it, and he saw a scrawl upon the bottom of the parchment. He examined it more closely, and he saw that it was the autograph of the King, Louis XVIII! ‘Are you satisfied now?’ asked the holder of the instrument. ‘Go on,’ gasped Montfere. He was pale and trembling, for he was sorely affrighted. ‘Now Arnaud Montfere, you will lead the way to your library.’ The trembling man



turned towards the door, and the visitors followed him. When they reached the library the door was closed, and then one of the officers ordered Montmorillon to proceed to point out to them what might be of benefit to their present need. The smuggler turned towards the great cabinet. It was built of black oak, and seemed to be a part of the original structure, the whole not only fitting exactly the place where it stood, but being also sheathed and panelled like the rest of the apartment. Montmorillon tried to open the large doors that closed the upper part of the cabinet, but they were locked, and he informed the officers that he should need the key. 'But that is only my private repository,' said the count. 'Never mind that. Give us the key.' The key was quickly forthcoming, and when the doors were opened they betrayed a set of drawers, racks, shelves, and pigeon-holes, most of which were filled with papers and documents of various kinds. The centre of the space was occupied with the pigeon-holes, which, as could be plainly seen, ran away back to the wall, and above the holes were the racks, while below and upon either side were the drawers. The smuggler disturbed none of the papers which were thus brought to view, but for some moments he remained gazing upon the place as though he were meditating upon what he should do next. He placed his hand several times upon different parts of the cabinet, but without effect. At length he seemed to catch at the idea he had been waiting for, for he raised his hand and grasped one of the little partitions that separated two pigeon-holes. There was a low click followed this movement, and then the operator placed his hand upon the partition immediately below. This, after a little effort, he slightly raised, and then pulled it wholly out. Then he seized hold upon the edge of the next partition, and with a gentle pull the whole department of pigeon-holes swung outwards upon concealed hinges. The whole concern opened like a door, leaving the racks above, and the drawers upon the sides and below, all in their places. Beyond the space which had been occupied by these little compartments appeared a series of little drawers which were let into the very walls of the building, and the existence of which could never have been discovered by an uninitiate. Arnaud Montfere looked upon this development with the most complete astonishment, and as soon as the first burst of astonishment had passed away, he sprang forward. 'Back! back!' he cried, laying his hand upon Montmorillon's shoulder. 'By heavens, you shall not—' 'Sir count,' said one of the officers, calmly, but with startling meaning, 'we have our duty to perform, and if you are wise you will not interfere.' Montfere let go his hold upon the smuggler and moved back, and then the strange man proceeded to open the drawers. There were six of them, and from each one he took papers, and when he had found them all, he said, as he handed them over to the officers—'Here, gentlemen, are the papers you have heard mentioned. They are all the private papers which the old Marquis de Vaux left behind him when he died. I do not know the character of them all, and I suppose there are many there which will interest no one now. You know the old marquis was very methodical, and from the appearance of the packages I should suppose you would find no difficulty in ascertaining the purport of all the papers without reading them through. You had better take all, and then you can use such as may have a bearing upon the matter in question.' 'You think there is nothing else?' 'No, nothing more.'

'But—but—what means all this?' asked Montfere, in a tone of the utmost concern. 'Why have you come here in this manner? And why do you take those papers away? What are they? What is it? Tell me?' 'We have nothing to tell, sir, for we know nothing. You must make your inquiries at head quarters.' 'But you shall tell me—' 'We wish you a very good morning, sir.' And thus speaking the three visitors bowed themselves out from the library. The count called after them, but they paid him no notice.

## CHAPTER XIX.

A BLESSING. A CURSE.

WE will now return to the chateau de Montigny. After the marquis left our hero so abruptly the youth stood for some time in utter astonishment. His head was dizzy, and object about him were seen but indistinctly. He really shook himself to see if he was awake. He succeeded in proving this beyond a doubt, and then he tried to remember if he had not heard wrongly. But this was impossible. The strange words sounded in his ears, and there could be no mistake. What it all meant he could not imagine. Surely mystery followed mystery in this day of life at present. With this thought he started to his feet. He once more assured himself that he had not heard the marquis' misunderstandingly and then he started forth upon his mission of love. He went directly to the little room where Isidore generally sat to read, and he knocked at the door, and a low, sad voice bade him enter. 'How! Henry?' uttered the maiden, starting with surprise. 'Yes, dearest,' murmured the youth, advancing and sinking down on the ottoman by her side. 'Yes, Isidore,' he added, winding his arms about her. 'And you have come to bid me farewell,' she said, looking up with a painful expression. 'O, no, no, no. O, no! No, Isidore—I have come to love you always—to bless and protect you while life shall last.' 'Alas! Henry you misunderstand me. I cannot leave my father. I shall ever love—ever. I shall never love another—but I cannot flee from my father.' 'O, Isidore—light of my life—it is you misunderstand.—Your father has sent me to you. He has told me to come and comfort you and love you. O, dearest, we are not to be separated. The maiden looked up in bewilderment; but at length she comprehended what her lover said, and she told him he had misunderstood. 'O,' she faintly murmured, 'that is too joyful to be true. There is some misunderstanding.' 'No, no,' persisted the youth. At that moment the door opened, and the marquis entered. He gazed upon the pair a moment and then said: 'My child are you happy now?' 'O, father, tell me what Henry means? He has told me—' But she could not finish the sentence, and to hide her tears she pillowed her face in her lover's bosom. 'Isidore,' said the old man, while the tears which he could not keep back started from his own eyes, 'Henry has told you truly. If it will make you happy you may love him as much as you please, and I will not tear you from him again. But you will not forget to love your father.' The old man placed their hands together as he spoke—the hands of the youth and the maiden—and then he turned quickly from the room.

Several days had passed since this happy event, when, one afternoon, as Henry was coming in from the garden, a horseman rode up into the court and dismounted. Our hero heard the tramp of the hoofs, but a wing of the chateau cut off the rider, and, as natural, feeling curiosity, he went to see who had come. He had just turned the corner when he stood face to face with Arnaud Montfere! The count started back as though he had seen a ghost, and for some moments was unable to speak. 'What you here?' he at length gasped turning pale as ashes.

'Yes, Arnaud Montfere. I am here. Is there anything strange about it?' But the count could not speak. His teeth were set and his hands clasped. Henry saw his emotion, and he saw, too, that he was perfectly stunned. The youth was not armed, and knowing not what the villain might attempt in a moment of maniac passion, he turned at once towards the door of the hall, but he was careful not to lose sight of his enemy. Montfere stood there alone for some minutes and was called to himself, by the groom coming up and asking if he would have his horse taken care of. 'Yes, of course—Where is he—By the powers of darkness, fellow, how came that.' These fragments of speech were uttered incoherently, and the count hardly realized where he was as he spoke. He looked upon the youth, and the color again forsook his cheeks. 'Sir Arnaud,' spoke the marquis, seeming anxious to put an end to an embarrassing affair, 'I know why you are so strangely moved, and there is no need that you should labor to throw off an appearance which so well accords with your feelings. Allow me to speak plainly with you, and, for the sake of us both I trust you will not ask me any questions. But, sir, circumstances have transpired which must, as you should be aware demand a suspension, at least, of intimacy between us. I hope you will understand?' 'I—I—do not understand, Sir Phillip,' stammered the count. 'I think you do, sir. I am sure you understand enough. This youth is my friend. I should think that would be enough.' There was a bitter coldness in the tone and manner of the marquis that cut Montfere to the quick, and as this aroused his anger, it served to loosen his tongue. 'Am I to understand,' he said, 'that you have taken the fisher's bastard in my place?' 'Be still Henry,' said the marquis, as he noticed that the youth was moving. And then turning to Montfere he continued: 'You are to understand what you please. I do not feel in the mood to accuse you of any crime, so I simply inform you, for the present that it is my desire that our friendship should end here. If you are wise you will not force matters farther.'

## CHAPTER XX.

LIGHT IS GATHERING ABOUT A DARK PLACE.

FOR three days after the interview just recorded things moved on as usual at the chateau de Montigny. Isidore now received her lessons in drawing regularly, and the times devoted to that calling were seasons of intellectual enjoyment and improvement. Sometimes the marquis came to see how his child progressed, and he could not but see how happy his sweet Isidore was; and he saw, too, that her love for him had rather increased, for she had more heart for love now.

On the fourth morning—the fourth from the visit of Arnaud Montfere—the weather was pleasant and refreshing. Isidore received her morning's lesson, and then she went and sat with her father until dinner time. After dinner Henry sat down to make up some subjects for the next day's lesson, and Isidore went out into the garden to trail up some of her young vines. She had been engaged in this way some ten minutes when she heard a footfall near her, and on turning she had just time to catch the outlines of a man, when a shawl was thrown suddenly over her head so that she could not make a cry, and then she felt herself lifted up and borne away. She knew that it was a stout man who carried her, and that she was being borne very swiftly away. She realized being carried over seven fences, and at length she heard the neighing of horse. Soon afterwards she was placed upon the animal's back, the man took his seat behind her, and then she was borne off at a gallop. In half an hour the horse stopped, and the affrighted and half-smothered girl was lifted off. Then she was borne a short distance further, through a door-way up a course of steps, through another door, and then she was set down. The bandage was taken from her head, and she found herself in the presence of Arnaud Montfere! 'Now my sweet maiden, what think you of my gallantry?' he asked, in a half-mocking and half exultant tone. 'How will your father look now upon his pledge to me?'—

'Count Montfere!' gasped the maiden, utterly at a loss for words to express her feelings, and too much moved to ask any questions. 'Ay, this is me, lady.' For some moments the poor girl remained dumb, but at length she came to a comprehension of the scene. 'Sir count,' she said at length, with a firmness that surprised even herself, 'What means this outrage?' 'Its meaning is most simple, fair lady. Some short time since your father promised me your hand, and now I claim it. I have taken him at his word, and have taken my bride. Can anything be more simple?' 'But my father, sir, has recanted—he has retracted everything concerning that marriage.' 'Ah, lady, it takes two to make a bargain, and it takes two to legally break it. I did not consent to his last arrangement. I did not recant—so your father and myself differed. Under such circumstances those must win who can. I think I shall win this time. At any rate I have the bird, and shall keep it. You will be my wife this very night.' 'No, no, no,' cried Isidore. 'I shall not. You do not mean it.' 'Just as sure as there is a God in Heaven, you shall be my wife this night, and your father may find you if he can.'

There was something in this not to be mistaken, and Isidore began to fear that the worst had truly come. In her agony she gazed about her, and found herself in a small, unfurnished room, with only one little window on the roof. 'Where am I?' she cried, clasping her hands. 'O, where am I?' 'You are safe, and where your cries cannot arouse any person to your help; but you shall not have the chance to cry, for I have only brought you here for a while. We'll have a safer place—a place where the heat of the sun won't be so oppressive.' With those words Montfere left her, and as he passed out he locked the door after him. An hour passed away, and another, and the light from the window grew dim. It was evening, and yet she was there alone! She cried out now with all her power, and that same mocking laugh answered her. Montfere was returning. He shortly afterwards entered the room and

bade her to follow him, but he took her by the arm and led her out lest she should follow wrong if left alone. When they reached the bottom of the stairs, he blinded her again, but ere long she knew she was in the open air. She now walked sometime, and she could feel from the coldness of her feet that the grass was damp with dew. Suddenly there came a rushing sound upon her ear. Her conductor uttered a deep curse and pushed her one side. She heard confused voices, and in a moment more she was caught up again and borne off at a swift pace; but it was not far, for soon she heard a dull heavy blow, her conductor uttered a low groan, and she felt him sinking down. His hold upon her loosened, and instinctively she sprang one side and tore the bandage from her eyes. It was star-light, and she saw that she was directly in front of a huge building, it was the Chateau de Vaux. 'Isidore—my love—safe?' 'Yes,' murmured the maiden; and on the next instant she was clasped to her lover's bosom. And her father came up to greet her, too, and she rested also upon his bosom. 'You have not been in great danger,' whispered Henry, for Montfere has been watched ever since you were taken from the garden at home. That strange man, Montmorillon, has watched him.'

This removed a load from the maiden's bosom, for the idea of danger passed is palsy in its effects. 'Come, come,' said Henry, 'Montmorillon says that we must come into the chateau. See they are taking Montfere in.' Isidore looked, and she saw men ahead of her, and with her father on one side, and Henry on the other, she walked on. When they reached the spacious piazza, Montmorillon met them and conducted them into one of the great drawing rooms, where the large lamps were lighted, and where Arnaud Montfere stood bound hand and foot. Montfere stood by the side of a marble table, and by him stood the same officers who accompanied Montmorillon to search the cabinet. The Marquis de Montigny was conducted to a seat, and Isidore sat down by his side. 'What—in the name of Heaven, is all this parade about a girl?' uttered Montfere, gazing around upon those who were present. 'We will tell you soon enough,' returned Montmorillon. And then turning to where sat the Marquis and Henry, he continued: 'Now, Henry, you shall know something of which you have so often asked. Listen: Years ago there lived here a bold knight and true, named John de Vaux. He built this noble chateau, and he adorned these grounds. His first wife died and left him childless and he married again—' 'He did not marry again,' yelled Arnaud Montfere. 'Hark ye sir,' spoke one of the officers, 'you are our prisoner, taken by the king's own order. Speak again like that, and we will put this companion into your mouth!' He held up an iron gag as he spoke, the very sight of which was enough to make one's blood run cold, and Montfere cowered back. 'He married again,' resumed Montmorillon. 'He was then forty, and he married a girl eighteen; but he loved her, and she loved him. She loved him not because he was a marquis, nor because he was rich—but because he was good, and kind, and brave, and noble. Her name was Isabel, and people called her handsome. He brought her from the south of the kingdom. This wife bore him a son. He saw it once—he held it to its father's bosom a few moments, and then he went away with the Emperor Napoleon, for he was a general in the army. He was among the few nobles who followed that great man. He came back only when he was brought back

to be buried, for he died of a wound received in battle. Napoleon was at that time in Paris. Among all Sir John's relatives he had only one that could claim relationship, and he was a cousin named Arnaud Montfere. He stands before you now. This cousin hastened off to Paris and saw the Emperor, and by telling one truth, and one lie, he succeeded in having the widow of de Vaux and her child cast off, and the whole estate settled upon himself. He told that the Lady Isabel was the daughter of one of Napoleon's bitter enemies. This was true. He also told that she was never married legally to the old marquis, but that she was only his mistress, and this he professed to prove by the signatures of some dozen men whom no one ever heard of. But the emperor made sure that Isabel was the child of the old Count Hopart de Chamborant, and he cared for nothing more. De Chamborant had favored the republic but he hated an empire, and hence Napoleon's anger, for the opposition of the old count was upon principle, and it rubbed against the tender points of the aspiring man. Illegitimacy was made a working point, but the emperor cared but little for it. He only sought to get the matter off his mind, which he did by giving Montfere all he asked. Isabel de Vaux carried her child to the cot of Pierre Fretart, and there the boy, at least found a home. The mother left her child there, and then she went to Paris, for she felt sure that if she could see the emperor, and tell him her whole story, he would listen to her and make her some amends. She knew that his heart was not of iron. But Napoleon had gone to Germany, and she came back. She went again to Paris when summer came, and again the emperor was gone—now towards Prussia—and those whom he had left behind him to look out for civil affairs heard her petition and turned to the record of the estate 'de Vaux,' and they told her she was not the nobleman's wife, and never was. Heart-sick and weary she returned again to the fisherman's cot, and told them to keep the boy—to call him Henry—to treat it as their own—to bring him up in virtue—and to be kind to him. Then she kissed the darling idol of her soul—she wept over him, and then she turned once more into the cold world, a wanderer, alone upon the earth. But time had not been barren of all good. The wanderer at length found friends. She found the record of her marriage in the church of the little village of Arndi, in Navarre, and that she had carried to him who is now our king. I carried it for herself and I left not the king until I had received from him the promise that the wife and child of Sir John de Vaux should be restored to their rights. *And the work is done.* Henry de Vaux, you are now in your own chateau! Did I not tell you the future had happiness in store for you?' 'What mean you now?' uttered Arnaud Montfere, half in madness, and half in pure terror. 'This chateau is mine, and no power can rest it from me!' 'It is not yours, Arnaud Montfere,' calmly returned Montmorillon, advancing towards the spot where he stood; 'but you will find a home in a government prison the next time you lie down. You will go to Paris and some others will go with you, and mayhap you may return here, but if you do it will be only to be tried for the crime of murder. Lead him out, officers.' As Montmorillon thus spoke the officers led the base count from the room, after having loosened the cords upon his legs so that he could walk. The villain cursed and swore,

and then he prayed and entreated, and as a last resort he wept and promised to divide with those whom he cheated. But no attention was paid to him. As soon as he was gone Montmorillon turned to his friends and said: 'I must see this man off, and then I will rejoin you. Make yourselves at home for surely, Henry owes it to you to extend the hospitalities of this noble chateau.' This was spoken with a genial smile, and in a moment more the strange man was gone, and the old marquis was left with his two children. And Henry was left with his *two guests*.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## CONCLUSION.

PHILIP DE MONTIGNY was the first to speak after Montmorillon had gone. 'Ah, my dear boy,' he said, seizing Henry by the hand, 'I mistrusted this when we spoke first together of the strange woman who had appeared to us both. As soon as you told me that Arnaud Montfere was seeking your life, I mistrusted that you were the child of John de Vaux—that your own countenance told me that I had ground for such belief. And when, in the light of all this, the subject of that nameless woman was brought up, I at once knew her. I could see it all then—at least with strong faith. I knew your father well, Henry, and he was a noble man. He was my best friend. And I remember, too, when he brought his young wife home. She was beautiful then.' 'She was his wife then!' whispered the youth. 'Yes, yes, Sir John told me himself about his marriage away off almost under the shade of the Pyrenees. But I heard not of the accusation that was brought against her until she had altogether disappeared, and then I could not find her.' 'I hope she is safe now,' murmured the youth. 'She is,' returned the marquis, 'for Montmorillon told me so. But I suppose she would not be here to see the face, and hear the curses of her vile enemy. Be joyful, now my boy.' 'Joyful?' uttered Henry starting up. 'O, I am all, all joy. But I am yet anxious, too. You have not told me of Montmorillon, Sir Philip?' 'Because I know nothing of him. But hark—here he comes.' At that moment the stranger smuggler returned. He looked noble now, for he was superbly dressed. His habit was a Moorish costume, with a long robe of purple velvet heavily trimmed with gold, and secured about the waist by a silken sash of scarlet silk. He wore upon his head a cap of blue velvet, from the right side of which bowed an ostrich plume. He advanced close to where our three friends sat, and looking upon Henry, he said:—'Now, Henry, my work in your behalf is almost done. Your mother will soon be here, and then you will have no more need of me. But I shall never forget you—never.' 'You will not leave us!' cried the youth, starting to his feet. 'You shall not go away from me now. No, no, you will stop and find a home with me. It is you who have given me this noble home, and I shall be happier if you remain to share it with me.' Say that you will.' 'Not now, Henry,' said Montmorillon, struggling with emotions which he vainly endeavored to keep back. 'You will need me no more. And beside, the notorious smuggler, who has so long set the laws of England at defiance, would hardly be safe to settle down now.' 'My friend,' spoke the marquis, 'let not that fear trouble you, for I will give you all my influence for protection. I beseech you stay

with us.' 'O, you shall stay,' cried Henry again, 'We cannot lose you now. Stay with me and see how happy I will make you, and how both Isidore and myself will love you. O, do stay.' 'Yes,' urged the lovely girl, looking beseechingly up. 'Stay with us now. Your society is needed to fill up our happiness.' The smuggler turned away and bowed his head, and his companions could see tears trickle down between his fingers and drop upon the floor. 'I can resist you no longer,' he at length uttered. 'But let me reflect for a few moments.' He turned away again as he spoke, and removed the silken sash from his waist. Then he bowed his head, and with a quick movement he let the velvet robe fall from his shoulders, and then having torn away the cap, he turned about and faced his friends. That black, curling hair now swept down over the shoulders, the beard was all gone, and in the place of the velvet robe appeared a close fitting gown of dark satin, beneath the breast of which a full, round bosom was swelling with wild emotion. What a transformation! The absence of that close curled, dark beard, which had covered the cheeks, the chin, and the lips, made a new face, and one of still wondrous beauty. But those eyes—those strange, black orbs, were not changed, save that now they were filled with tears. For some moment not a word was spoken. Astonishment sat too powerfully upon them. But at length Henry broke the spell. He moved towards the strange presence, and while he placed his head upon that heaving bosom, and wound his arms around that swelling neck, he murmured: 'My mother! O, my mother!' 'Yes, yes, my boy. The cloud is off now,' she sobbed as she returned his embrace. 'O, Henry—my boy—we shall be parted no more by the powers of earth. We will be happy now.' But words could not express the frantic, joy-crazed, startling emotions of that moment. There were too many elements of feeling for anything like calm words. That Isabel de Vaux now stood with them they knew—and they knew, too, that she stood there in the place of Marco Montmorillon; but that they could never see Montmorillon again, that his identity was gone with this new development, seemed passing belief; and yet they could not disbelieve it, for they had the evidence present with them. At length, at the end of half an hour, the party became calm, and were again seated together. 'Now,' said de Montigny, 'I think we have cried and laughed as much as will be good for us at present. So my Lady Isabel, you must relieve our anxieties and curiosities by explaining this most strange mystery.' 'It will take but a few moments to do that,' returned the marchioness, with a bright, beaming smile, 'for I have already told you much. After I gave up my child to the keeping of old Pierre Fretart I wandered about for some time, but what could I do? I found that a young female had many dangers to encounter that were not forced upon the other sex. I had allowed the hope to take possession of me that at some time I should gain my rights. I was disgusted with almost everything about me, and at length I resolved to assume the habit of a man. Being naturally stout and tall, this guise well became me, and when I came to add a heavy beard, I was even myself surprised. I made the beard myself from my own shorn locks, and it fitted so nicely as to defy suspicion. In my youth I was much upon the water. My father owned a yacht at Bayonne, and I often sailed in it. I loved the sea, and was it not natural that, under such circumstances as I was then placed, I should

think of the open sea as my safest place? Remember that what I had been called to pass through had disgusted me with governments. I sold my jewels in Paris for five thousand crowns—I had many superb ones, and I knew what they were worth. I then returned to St. Malo, and there I fell in with some smugglers—honest, good hearted men, and their mode of life, presented a charm which I had found nowhere else, for I wanted something that should keep down the continued gnawing of my grief. These smugglers owned a noble brig, and I bought half of it, and gave them my name as Marco Montmorillon. I went with them, and I liked it. By continued practice I got my voice under perfect control, and not one of my companions ever suspected my sex. In time I became commander of the brig, and I made money, but I gave it away as fast as I made it. I did not want it, for I did not enter upon that wild life for money-making. I helped the poor where I could find them, and thus I made me friends who bless me to this day. 'At length Napoleon fell, and Louis came to the throne of France, and again I went to Paris, and in my true guise I saw the king. At last he promised me that he would make inquiries into the matter at once. He sent to Arudi, where I told him I was married, and his messenger found the record. Then he wanted to see my husband's private papers, to find how much property he left. I told him that I could obtain them, and he sent two officers with me. I got them and sent them back by the officers, for I would not go myself, as I wished to remain here to protect you from a villain. They found the king at Alençon, and this afternoon they returned, bringing all the documents we could need, and also an order for Montfere's arrest. I was on my way to your chateau, Sir Philip, to break the news there, when I saw Montfere running away with your fair child. I followed him at a distance, and lost not sight of him again. And now what more? I can only say that I have given up my share in the smuggling interest some time since, and my old companions all think I am going to leave the kingdom. And so must all think. 'And now what can we do but commence life for myself and child anew? You, Henry, are now the Marquis de Vaux. I have the letters in my possession. And, my son, we will be happy—very happy!' And so they were. And the two estates were united after all. While winter was blowing her cold blasts over the earth, there came a messenger along the Ille road, and he stopped one night at the Chateau de Montigny; and he told that Arnaud Montfere was dead—that he committed suicide in the prison where he had been confined. And the warm bright summer time came again, and between the two chateaux our friends divided their time. And at both they enjoyed the perfect assurance of all that joy can give, or that virtue can secure.