
The Quiberon
Touch ~ ~ ~



Cyrus Townsend Brady



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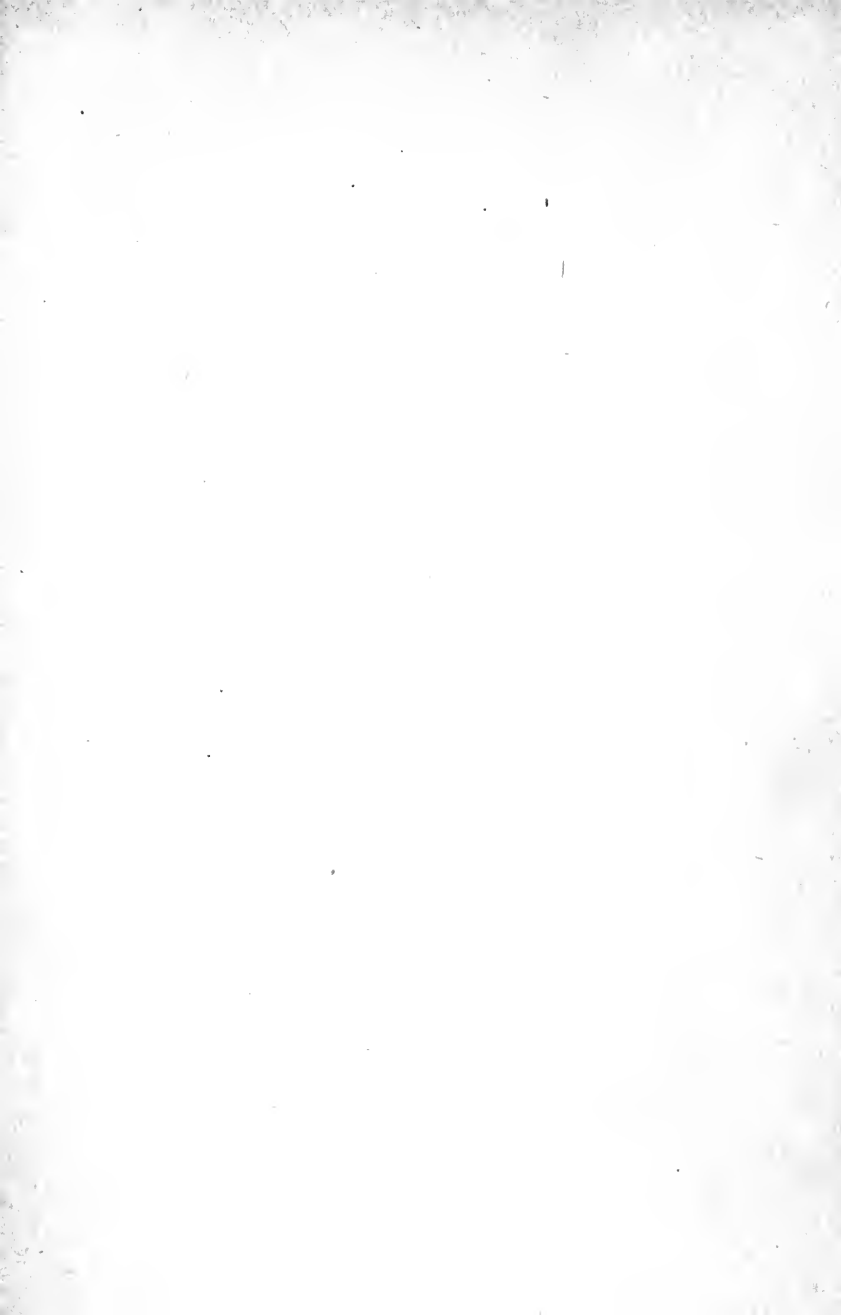
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Commodore Byron McCandless

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THE QUIBERON TOUCH





The Quiberon Touch

A Romance of the Days of the
Great Lion Hawked in the Sea

CYRUS TOWN AND BRADY

Author of "The Commodore Paul
Jones," "The Riddle of the
"The Journal of the 'African Prince,'"

(see back)

... from the West
... New York

New York
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1891

The betrothal of "Little France."

(See page 255.)

The Quiberon Touch

A Romance of the Days when "The Great Lord Hawke" was King of the Sea

By

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

Author of

"For Love of Country," "Commodore Paul Jones," "Reuben James," "For the Freedom of the Sea," etc.



" 'Twas long past noon of a wild November day
When Hawke came swooping from the West ;
He heard the breakers thundering in Quiberon Bay,
But he flew the flag for battle, line abreast.
Down upon the quicksands roaring out of sight
Fiercely beat the storm-wind, darkly fell the night,
But they took the foe for pilot and the cannon's glare
for light
When Hawke came swooping from the West."

—NEWBOLT.

New York

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

1901

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DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER,
HARRIET CORA TOWNSEND BRADY.

In breakers crashing on the shore,
In tempest's shriek, or cannon's roar,
In cradle song, or cry of bird,
In lovers' voices softly heard,
In mighty ships upon the wave,
In glorious deed done by the brave,
In all things beautiful and dear,
Told as I've tried to tell them here,
May some voice—man, or maid, or sea—
Fail not to speak a word of me!

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THE QUIBERON TOUCH

BOOK I

AN IDYL OF BRITTANY

CHAPTER I

IN THE FOG OFF USHANT

FOR two days H. B. M. brig-of-war Boxer had been groping about in a thick fog off the island of Ushant on the Breton littoral. At least, in default of astronomical observation, that is where Lieutenant Philip Grafton, her commander, imagined his ship to be. The Boxer was bound in for Portsmouth, England, with despatches from Admiral Boscawen, then commanding at Gibraltar. She had made a quick passage from the Straits and had met with no bad luck or misfortune until she had run into the fog near Belle Isle, since which time she had been slowly working her way northward, as the fitful breezes and mist-hidden seas permitted. The despatches she bore were of grave importance, and haste in their delivery had been enjoined upon the young commander. Therefore, he chafed under the vexatious delays with all the impatience of a sailor to whose progress fogs and calms are obstacles well-nigh insurmountable by his sea-philosophy.

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To his impatience was added a vivid consciousness of probable and imminent danger, for the Boxer was drifting about within easy striking distance of the great French naval depot of Brest, which was filled with the capital ships and cruisers of the enemy; and the narrow seas, in the absence of any English fleet nearer than Gibraltar, swarmed with men-of-war coming and going. At that time no English blockade had been established on the French seaboard, and the ships of the "Well Beloved" King ran in and out of Brest at their pleasure.

So long as the fog held, the English brig was safe from observation and the danger of capture by a ship of superior force was minimized; it amounted to almost nothing in fact. But when the fog lifted—unless it were accompanied by a good breeze, which would scarcely be likely at that season of the year—the Boxer would be at the mercy of anything of sufficient size that happened along. Though young in the service, Lieutenant Grafton had earned a well-deserved reputation for daring and skill, and gladly would he have welcomed an opportunity for a brush with a cruiser of a force equal to, or even somewhat greater than, his own. English ships then were accustomed to giving odds; indeed, unless there was some preponderance in force in favour of the French, they took but little credit for a victory. But a vessel which would at all match his own was not likely to appear.

Grafton was one of the few American pro-

In the Fog off Ushant

vincials in the Royal Naval Service. His father had been in command of one of the armed vessels of the squadron of the Colony of Massachusetts which had done such remarkably good work in Pepperell's successful campaign against Louisburg in 1745. As a reward for his services on that occasion—services by no means inconsiderable—stout old John Grafton had been given a commission in the king's navy, and was now a rear-admiral, retired, living in the enjoyment of his honours in his ancestral home in Massachusetts. His son, who had followed his father's profession, also enjoyed the royal favour and had risen rapidly through the various grades of the naval service to the rank of lieutenant. He had, in his brief career, given evidence of superior ability, and it was thought with his influence that he would eventually obtain high rank in the service.

On the morning of the 3d of July, 1754, the young captain was restlessly pacing the weather side of the small quarter-deck of his brig in close consultation with his first lieutenant, a kindred spirit, named Stanhope.

"Dash me, John!" he exclaimed impatiently, dropping the quarter-deck for the nonce, as they were out of hearing of everybody except an old seaman at the wheel, who had sailed with Grafton's father from boyhood and had, naturally, attached himself to the fortunes of the son. "Dash me, but this is vexing! Here we lie tossing about like an empty bottle in these beastly swells and

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not a thing to tell us where we are or where we are drifting!"

"True, Captain Grafton," answered the lieutenant, giving his superior his courtesy title, "the fog's so thick you could almost cut it. I can't even see the heel of the bowsprit for'ard. 'Tis most annoying."

"Ay, man, but while the weather holds it gives us this one advantage: if we can't see, we can't be seen, either. So long as there is no wind I prefer this mist-blanket, for if the fog lifts and the wind doesn't come, we're pretty sure to fall foul of one of those Brest cruisers, which would be too large for our little hooker. Damme, Stanhope, I wish we had a tidy frigate under us! I'd like nothing better than to swing into old Portsmouth with a prize in tow. That'd look well in the despatches, old boy, and we'd both get a step. But, gad, this little tub of ours isn't a match for anything that we are likely to run across. The French have become so wary they don't seem to send out any more small cruisers."

"The fact is," answered Stanhope, "they haven't any more to send. Our ships have been gobbling them up so, and——"

"Hark! what's that?" cried Grafton, stopping short and catching his subordinate by the arm. "There!" pointing aft, "didn't you hear it? A ship's bell!"

As he spoke the sound of a bell struck, in couplets, four times, came faintly toward them through the gray mist-laden air of the morning.

In the Fog off Ushant

"Ay, surely, I heard it," answered Stanhope, turning about, lifting his hand to his ear as he spoke, and concentrating his attention in the direction of the sound.

"Where do you make it to come from?"

"Why, about there, dead astern, I should say, sir," replied the other, pointing aft.

"Right O, Mr. Stanhope. Pass the word quietly forward for the men to make no noise," said the captain, turning to the midshipman on watch. "It's ten chances to one yon's a French ship."

Many of the crew had heard the sound of the bell, and they stood listening with eager intentness in various attitudes about the deck. In obedience to their captain's direction, all of them remained still and quiet, waiting his further orders. Presently a little puff of air fanned the cheek of the watchful commander.

"The breeze is coming, I trust," he said to Stanhope. "See! The fog thins yonder! 'Tis lightening surely! Get the men to their quarters without the drum, Mr. Stanhope; cast loose the batteries and load with a round shot and a stand of grape. Bear a hand! Lively, but be quiet with it all! We may have need to show our teeth in a moment. Ay, it clears!"

In a moment, as the lieutenant ran forward giving the order, the deck of the brig was filled with silent confusion. The men sprang like big cats to their stations. The little guns of the vessel were soon cast loose and provided, and, having

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been double-shotted, were run out again and a good turn taken with the side-tackles to hold them. The wind was coming stronger now, but still in fitful puffs, from the southwest. Singularly enough, the fog seemed to be rising against the wind.

Presently, by the watchful young commander's direction, the sail-trimmers braced about the yards to take advantage of the rising breeze, and the Boxer began slowly to forge through the water. It was the first time in several days that she had enjoyed good steerage way, and all hands watched her travel with feelings of great relief. Before she had gathered much way, however, they heard again the sound which had awakened them to action. Five bells this time came floating up from the southward as before. On this occasion the sound was clearer and more distinct, showing that the approaching vessel had drawn nearer. The deep quality of the tones denoted that the bell was a large one.

"By gad, Stanhope, that bell doesn't swing on anything under a heavy frigate," said Grafton; "we're in for it this time unless we can make some distance with this brisking breeze while the fog holds. What's she making?"

"About two knots, I think, sir," answered Stanhope, looking over the side at the sluggish water slowly drawing past; "maybe two and a half, no more."

"'Tis a cursed slow boat; but British ships are not built for running, they leave that for t'other

In the Fog off Ushant

fellows. I wish now the fog would hold a little longer. Keep your weather eye lifting there, Jabez," continued Grafton, turning to old Slocum, who still stood at the wheel; "don't lose a bit of it."

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the old Yankee, shifting his quid as he gave a careful squint at the top-sails, which the wind was scarcely strong enough to fill. "I won't lose none o't, yer honour."

For a few anxious moments the brig held on. Presently, in spite of their desires, the two officers perceived that the fog was indeed going. However, there was nothing to be done. It was still too thick to see anything distinctly, so they held on steadily. At eleven o'clock, from the other ship, they heard again the sound of the bell, which now rang six times. She, too, had been feeling the wind, and was evidently edging along in their wake, which was pure chance, for they had given her no sign of their presence.

"Confound the luck!" said Grafton; "whatever she is, she's right after us. By the sound, I should say we haven't gained a fathom!"

"Lost, rather," suggested Stanhope. "This brig's no goer at all in this sort of breeze, and it's so fitful no one can tell——"

"By heaven, the wind has shifted again! We're aback! Shift the helm there! All hands to the lee braces!" cried Grafton, as the wind suddenly swung about and took the ship aback.

Fortunately it was not blowing strong enough

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to do any damage, although the wind was increasing in force with every moment. But before the Boxer paid off, the fog suddenly lifted. It was brushed away from them as if it had been swept aside by a gigantic hand. The gray mist in front of them gave place to radiant golden light. The tossing white-capped waves, instead of showing the sickly leaden colour of the past few days, were thrown into brilliant blue by the irradiating sun. The brightness was almost dazzling. There did not seem to be a single cloud above them.

“Land ho!” shouted one of the men on the forecastle, as the mist disappeared.

There before them, and scarcely a mile away, rose the grim cliffs of the forbidding island of Ushant. They could see the breakers crashing and churning in sheets of foam about its feet.

“All hands to the lee braces!” cried Grafton promptly. “Starboard your helm! Flow the head-sheets, there! Haul over that spanker-sheet. We must get away from that, Stanhope!”

“Sail ho!” cried one of the after-guard at the same instant, as the handy little brig spun around on her heel and thrust her blunt nose up toward the wind on the port tack.

There, scarcely two cables' length away from them, they saw the bows of an immense ship, ghostlike, come shoving through the fog, which still enshrouded that quarter of the sea.

CHAPTER II

THE SMASHING OF THE BRIG

“’Tis a ship of the line!” shouted Stanhope, who immediately caught sight of it.

Grafton slewed himself about on his heel and rapidly took in the situation.

“And a Frenchman, by heaven!” he roared. “No English ship has bows like that! Break out the stuns’ls, Mr. Stanhope, we may need them presently.”

At the same instant they were seen from the ship of the line.

“Ship ahoy! What ship is that?” came up the wind from the French vessel.

“We’ll soon show you,” said Grafton, under his breath. “Man the port battery, lads! Jump lively! We must escape if we can!”

The two ships were sailing at right angles to each other now, one going free and the other just coming by the wind on the port tack. They were so near each other that the men clustered forward on the top-gallant forecastle of the French ship could easily be made out. The fog was going as if by magic.

A noble picture the huge liner made, under her

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great top-sails, with her courses in the brails and her light sails hanging by the clew-lines. They had suspected nothing on her and were entirely unprepared for what followed. All was ready on the Boxer now, and she was ranging ahead.

“Stand by!” roared Grafton, as they passed squarely across the Frenchman’s bow. “Fire!”

The eight six-pounders on the port side of the brig saluted the liner with an impudent broadside.

“Well done, my boys! Now then, hard up with the helm!” shouted Grafton. “Hands by the weather braces! Flow the spanker-sheets! Lively, lads!”

Before the men on the ship of the line had recovered from the astonishment inspired by Grafton’s audacity, the Boxer swung around and ran off free, again heading toward Ushant. For a few moments there was no little confusion on the French ship. Her jib-stay had been cut, the sail unsupported was dragging in the water. Rents appeared in the fore-sail, and parted shrouds here and there showed that the well-aimed discharge had done good service, although it had no effect on the heavy scantling and timbers of the liner. But no material damage, of course, had been or could be effected by the six-pound guns of a little three-hundred-ton brig against a French seventy-four. Still, the confusion consequent upon her intrepid attack enabled the brig to gain a considerable lead. It was necessary for him to get some distance away from his pursuer before Grafton could come by the wind again, in order to weather the western point of Ushant;

The Smashing of the Brig

which, to anticipate, he presently succeeded in doing.

In a short time, however—painfully short for the pursued—the liner, emulating the movements of the English cruiser, got the wind on her quarter and commenced bowling along after the brig. Her nimble crew had set sail after sail on her lofty spars, and she swept along in the bright sunny morning a towering and splendid picture of sea power and sea beauty. She had been wonderfully well handled for a Frenchman, and the evolutions were as smartly done as they could have been by a crack English crew—then the best sailors in the world. And as the English brig, having run free as long as she dared, at last bore up, her gigantic pursuer promptly did the same.

“They may talk as they please about the frog-eaters not being seamen,” said Grafton to the young officers congregated about him on the quarter-deck; “the man that handles that ship doesn’t need to take lessons from anybody. Wheel, there! Edge up into the wind, will you? See how she follows us, gentlemen! She gains on us hand over fist! See how she comes down! Bring up the despatches, Mr. Stanhope, and have them ready to heave overboard; they mustn’t get them if we are captured! Ah! They’re giving us a taste of their metal at last. Steady now, keep her up to it! Luff her hard!”

As he spoke the line-of-battle ship suddenly yawed, a puff of smoke broke out forward as her bow-chaser bore and a shot from a thirty-two-

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pounder came hurtling through the air at the brig. Fortunately it missed her.

“ Shall we make any reply, sir? ” asked Stanhope.

“ Nonsense! ” replied Grafton. “ We haven’t a gun on board that could carry half the distance. No, hold on as we are. I don’t think she’ll fire again. She’s overhauling us so rapidly that there is no use of their damaging their prize.”

They watched the chasing ship carefully for a few moments in gloomy silence. There was no escape for them apparently.

“ Now, I have an idea, ” burst out Grafton at last. “ If it fails, I guess we are good for a cruise on shore in one of Johnnie’s prisons. Slocum, let her go off a bit more, now. I think we’ve enough offing to weather Ushant, with something to spare, and I want monsieur to get well to windward of us. Stanhope, yon’s a noble ship. We can outfight these Frenchmen, but we can’t outbuild them. The best ships in our navy are those captured from King Louis.”

“ What’s the use of our bothering to build ships if the French will build them for us? ” asked the matter-of-fact and practical Stanhope. “ All we’ve got to do is to go out and take ’em.”

“ We won’t take that one, though.”

“ No, sir, we won’t, ” answered Stanhope, sighing over the gloomy prospect.

“ I wish to God we had the old Torbay under us, then we’d not show yon fellow our heels but our teeth, hey, Stanhope? ” exclaimed the captain.

The Smashing of the Brig

“Ay, sir; and with old Hawke in command——”

“No, man,” answered the young captain promptly; “I’d want to command her myself. I warrant that, with you to second me, we would give a good account of the gentleman yonder! See how he overhauls us! If he should yaw now and give us a broadside, I am afraid it would be all over with us. Look, how he is eating up to windward of us too! What a tub this is!”

“Ay, he slips along like a yacht. We’ve no show at all. It’s all up with us, I’m afraid,” answered Stanhope.

“I don’t quite give up the game yet. We’ll have one more try at a run presently. If he does the right thing, then we’re lost; if not, I think we’ll make it.”

“You can count on a seaman like the man handling that ship doing the right thing, sure.”

“Yes, I fear so. Still we can but try!”

Meanwhile old Jabez had been steering the brig with consummate seamanship. With every appearance of endeavouring to hold her close to the wind, he had skilfully allowed her to fall off, little by little, until she was quite perceptibly to leeward of the French ship. Grafton judged that now or never things were opportune for his daring attempt.

“Send the men to the starboard battery, Mr. Stanhope,” he said quietly, as he realized that he had approached the supreme moment, and it was about time to try his coup, or give over the attempt and give up the ship. “Get the stuns’ls ready for setting and see that the gear is all clear. I want

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smart work from the sail-trimmers, now! Slocum, stand by that helm and mind the orders! Bid the men train their guns aft, Stanhope, and fire when I give the word. Now, then! Up with the helm! Over with it! Hard-a-weather! Tend the after-braces! Hands ready! Round in forward, flatten in the head-sheets! So! Stand by with the star-board battery! Now! Fire! Let her have it, men! Sway away with those stuns'ls! Steady with the helm! Quick, for God's sake! Well done, all!"

Once more the eight six-pounders barked out. In a cloud of her own smoke the Boxer rounded on her heel again and, bringing the wind aft again, darted away at right angles to her former course. Covered with stuns'ls alow and aloft, she leaped along at a great pace, gaining distance with every moment. Were they to succeed in escaping?

But the captain of the liner had foreseen the skilful endeavour. A less able seaman might have attempted to emulate the Englishman's motions and followed on the brig's heels; a less thoughtful commander would not have been ready for the only move which would have stopped the daring manœuvre. With proper judgment, he chose to crush the audacious Englishman with his mighty battery.

In spite of the promptness with which Grafton's orders had been carried out, and the advantage gained thereby, the brig was still within easy range of all but the lightest guns of the French ship. Since the weather was mild, it permitted the lower deck ports to be opened and her heaviest guns to

The Smashing of the Brig

be used. As the Boxer presented her stern to her huge antagonist, the latter was suddenly wreathed with fire and smoke. The thunderous roar of her discharge could have been heard for miles. Her captain took no chance, every gun that bore was discharged at the doomed vessel.

A tempest of iron came hurtling aboard the brig. She was like an egg-shell under a trip-hammer. From a trim and saucy little vessel she was reduced in the twinkling of an eye to a wreck. The main-mast was carried away a few feet above the deck, the foretop-mast was hanging up and down the foremast, nearly every shroud and stay had been parted. The stern of the brig had been beaten in. Her boats were cut to pieces, and the decks were filled with dead and wounded, poor Stanhope among the former—a round shot had taken off his head. Old Jabez, unhurt, still clasped the wheel. The foresail, though almost cut to ribbons, still held a little wind, and the brig wallowed slowly ahead through the water.

“Good God!” exclaimed Grafton, who had come off scatheless, dazed at the failure of his effort and the deadly price he had paid so fruitlessly, “how horrible!”

It had been a gallant attempt. Indeed, the only possibility of escape had been that he had tried. It had failed owing to the preparedness and good judgment of the French captain. There were not ten sailors in France who could have done so well as he. With almost any one else opposing him, Grafton might have escaped. But now his brig was a wreck

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beneath him. There was nothing left for him but to surrender. Throwing his weighted bag of despatches overboard, he drew a handkerchief from his pocket and waved it toward his enemy.

Seeing the hopeless and helpless condition of her quarry, the French ship of the line swept gracefully up into the wind by the side of the broken brig. Her way was checked, her ponderous yards swung, and she hove-to a short distance off. A magnificent picture she presented, with her frowning tiers of guns, her lofty pyramids of sails, her decks crowded with brilliantly uniformed officers.

The French could plainly see that there was no boat left on the Boxer; therefore, in a few moments, a heavy cutter was swung from the davits of the liner and lowered into the water. Presently an officer, attended by a surgeon and a surgeon's mate, stepped on the deck of the brig.

"You speak French, monsieur?" asked the officer of Grafton, who stood in the gangway to receive him.

"Yes, sir," answered the American, bowing.

"And you are——?"

"Lieutenant Philip Grafton, commanding his Britannic Majesty's late brig Boxer. And you are——?"

"Lieutenant St. André du Verger, of his Most Christian Majesty's ship-of-the-line *Le Thésée*, commanded by M. le Comte de Kersaint de Kerguelen."

"I am at your service, monsieur. The fortune of war has made me your prisoner."

The Smashing of the Brig

“ M. de Kersaint desires that you repair on board his ship at once, monsieur.”

“ Willingly, M. du Verger,” said Grafton, striving gallantly to hide his sadness at this bitter ending of his cruise. “ At your orders. Will you see to the poor fellows I leave here? ”

“ With pleasure, M. le Capitaine. I have brought a surgeon and a surgeon's mate for the purpose.”

CHAPTER III

ENEMIES ARE FRIENDS

THE change from the broken and shattered brig to the spacious and magnificent ship of the line was startling. The latter was a brand-new ship fresh from the ways. Every improvement which the most skilled naval architects and ship-builders of the day could devise—and France easily led all nations in the fine art of naval construction at that time—had been lavished upon *Le Thésée*. The practical ability of the designers, exhibited in many novel and useful contrivances, had been re-enforced and not obscured by a lavish display of polished metal work, ornamental fittings, and wood-carving, which would have better suited a royal yacht than a vessel of war.

Every gun on the ship was of brass, and polished until it shone like new gold in the sunlight. Everything was spotlessly clean; and, in marked contrast to the usual run of French ships, the crew of this one was quiet and orderly. Efficiency was suggested by everything about her. Contrary to the usual practice of men-of-war in that period, the seamen were clad in neat uniforms of white duck, while the officers, of course, were resplendent in the

Enemies are Friends

blue and scarlet and gold lace of the French marine service. It was evident that not only was a sailor in command but a disciplinarian as well.

As Grafton came through the gangway he was met by an officer and conducted aft to the high poop deck, upon which a brilliant group of officers were collected about a tall, splendid-looking man in the prime of life, who was evidently the commander of the ship. Grafton stepped toward him, bowed gracefully, and then, extending his sword, remarked in excellent French, of which he was luckily a thorough master:

“The fortune of war, monsieur, has made my small vessel the prize of your magnificent ship.”

“You are a bold man, young sir, and in many instances—perhaps most—your gallant attempt to escape by running off before the wind would have been successful,” returned the French captain magnanimously. Then, touching the hilt of the young American’s sword, he added graciously, bowing in his turn, “Retain your sword, monsieur, I should be loath indeed to deprive so brave a man of the weapon which he has shown he knows how to wear so worthily. *Sang diou!*” he added, relapsing into the patois of his native province, “’twas an impudent thing, sir, to slap us in the face like that when we first caught sight of you, and then try to run for it! But there are few keels laid down that *Le Thesée* can not overhaul, I think. Hey, messieurs?” he questioned, turning to his officers, his remark being received with acclamations of assent. “Young sir,” he continued, addressing Grafton

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once more, "will you give me the name of your brig?"

"H. B. M. brig Boxer—at least she was his this morning. She is yours now, monsieur."

"Where from and whither bound, monsieur?"

"From Gibraltar to Portsmouth."

"On what errand?"

"With despatches, sir."

"Where are they?"

"Overboard and sunk, sir."

"Ha! And what of the fleet of Monsieur Boscawen?"

"I can tell you nothing of that, sir."

"Nor as to the contents of the despatches?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"Humph! Your name, young sir, and rank."

"Philip Grafton, monsieur, a lieutenant in H. B. M. Navy, lately First of the Torbay, ship of the line, and more recently commanding the Boxer."

"Grafton!" exclaimed the other surprised, "Are you an Englishman?"

"No, monsieur," answered the young officer promptly and proudly, "I am an American. I was born in Massachusetts."

"And you are the son of——?"

"Admiral John Grafton, monsieur, who commanded the colonial armed ship Shirley."

"At the siege of Louisburg in 1745?"

"The same, sir."

"Did your father ever tell you of the engagement he and one or two other private armed ships

Enemies are Friends .

had with a French frigate seeking to enter the harbour?"

"La Renommé?" interrupted Grafton in great surprise at the other's knowledge. "Certainly, monsieur, often. 'Twas that fight, indeed, that won his King's approval and gained him the commission which was in turn passed on to me."

"My faith, sir!" exclaimed the French captain, smiling, "'twas a hot fight indeed! I never have seen a better. He well deserved the commission he won. No wonder that you did not quail before a ship of the line, young man! You have in you the mettle of your father."

"Did you know my father, sir?" asked Grafton in great surprise.

"I have heard him speak from the iron throats of his guns, sir."

"Then you are——?"

"I was the captain of La Renommé."

"And your name is——?"

"Guy de Caetnampreu, Comte de Kersaint de Kerguelen, Capitaine de Vaisseau of His Most Christian Majesty Louis XV, whom God protect, and very much at your service, monsieur. Here is no case of prisoner and enemy, gentlemen. The father fought me, I befriend the son. Is it not just, messieurs?" asked Kersaint turning to his officers once more.

It was Grafton who answered:

"'Tis more than justice, Monsieur le Comte, 'tis kindness indeed!"

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“*N’importe*, monsieur; I would that I could give you back your ship, but that, of course, is impossible. Nevertheless, your captivity shall be made as light as possible. We are bound in for Brest, and this gentleman here,” indicating an old man in rich civilian dress, who had surveyed the scene with interest, “is my most noble kinsman, the Marquis de Chabot-Rohan. He will, I am sure, as my prospective sailing thence in a few days debars me from keeping you with me or extending you the hospitality of my poor house take you into his own château until you are exchanged. ’Twill be a pleasant prison, sir, and there grows a wild Breton rose within the walls. Is it not so, Monsieur le Comte?”

“As to the rose, I can not say. Monsieur Grafton may find it thorny; but as to receiving him, certainly, de Kersaint,” responded the old man just addressed by the captain. “I have a soft spot in my heart for Americans, as you know, since my only son honoured himself by marrying a daughter of Virginia—a land of brave men, messieurs, and fair women. Hélas!”

“Monsieur le Marquis,” quickly answered Grafton, who had not spent some years of his life at Court for nothing, “I thank you for your hospitality and I congratulate you upon the source from which it flows. I accept it gladly—roses and thorns as well.”

“Monsieur, you honour me by your acceptance. As to the rose, Monsieur de Kersaint speaks with the romantic license of Brittany. ’Tis but a child,

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monsieur, my little grand-daughter. I am the thorns—a dull old set surely,” added the old man smiling rather grimly.

“Faith, de Chabot, he who would fain pluck your rose will find you sharp enough, I’ll warrant. *Morbleu*, you haven’t forgot that parry and return you taught me when I was a boy and you a young soldier. Ah, messieurs, if any of you seek speedy gentle death you may easily find it before the Marquis’ point——”

“Gentlemen,” smiled the old man, “here is no thought of death, but the tale of a little girl. Monsieur Grafton——”

“There are roses in England and America, Monsieur le Marquis—ay, and thorns too. And no true man was ever deterred from wearing one for fear of the other. But, mistake me not, I’ll not seek to pluck your Breton flower,” replied the American, entering into the spirit of the jest. “I shall be your prisoner and——”

“Say my guest, monsieur. But enough,” said the old marquis, frowning slightly. “As to the rose, we have carried the pleasantry too far already, messieurs. Let us have no more of it. Monsieur Grafton, direct your private baggage to be brought to the ship here; we will leave for my château on our arrival this evening.”

“Monsieur de Kersaint,” said Grafton, “will you add to the obligations under which you have laid me, by giving orders that my poor men, the wounded, I mean, are to be well cared for, and then have my private baggage sent off to Le Thesée?”

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My steward, who is aboard the Boxer, will attend to it."

"Your men shall be attended to as if they belonged to me," responded the French captain graciously, "and your private belongings secured. Meanwhile, will you step into my cabin that we may discuss further our common interests and friendships? Monsieur St. Laurent," he added, turning to his executive officer, who held the rank of *Capitaine de frégate*, "will you throw a prize crew on the doughty little Boxer—a hard hitter indeed—and bid her follow us into Brest under a jury-rig when she can. On second thought, monsieur, lie by her for a few hours until she is fit to go ahead. We would better convoy her in. I should not like to lose her for all she is but a small prize."

CHAPTER IV

THE GARDEN AND THE ROSE

THE Château de Josselin, a place not unknown to history, lay hard by the sea-shore a few miles from the town of Brest toward which it turned its landward side. It was a building of great antiquity and had been in the possession of the family of de Rohan from feudal times. One face looked seaward over the wild crags, where the stormy waves of the Bay of Biscay broke in ceaseless onslaught, beating themselves into the white foam of sea agony upon the stern shores.

At the foot of the keep or principal tower, which was built upon the sheer edge of a precipitous headland, there was a deep indentation in the cliffs, which, if one possessed sufficient skill and knowledge to thread the narrow passage twisting between the roaring breakers, afforded a safe harbourage for boats and small coasting vessels. It had been long unused, of course, owing to the spacious harbour of Brest close at hand, but in old days it had been a favoured haven of the adventurous lords of Rohan—and sometimes of their enemies as well.

Landward the main château overlooked a singu-

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larly pleasant garden filled with ancient fruit and shade trees, the whole inclosed by a high wall from which, and better still from the high tower, a full view of Brest, its fortifications, its naval station, its harbour, and its shipping could be obtained. It was to this castle that Philip Grafton was conducted upon the evening of the arrival of *Le Thésée* in the harbour.

The Marquis de Chabot-Rohan, or, to give him his familiar title, de Chabot, the heir and successor to the dignities of the de Rohans in those parts, and consequently the master of rich and extensive possessions, kept up a princely estate in the old château, and it pleased him still to perpetuate the ancient usages and customs of his house so far as he could. The castle itself seemed to be maintained as a mediæval fortress might have been. The ditch surrounding it on the landward side, instead of being dry and grass-grown, as was the custom, was kept well filled with water; the drawbridge—the sole means of crossing the moat—was raised and lowered at appointed hours; and close watch and ward were kept by the feudal retainers of the house at the gateway and on the walls. To seaward the walls were so high and so strong that the castle, placed on the very edge of the beetling cliffs, was believed to be impregnable.

Lord of the high, the low, and the middle justice, the marquis endeavoured to continue and exemplify the traditions of the old feudal barons, whose former powers and antique privileges in most cases had been abrogated by the overwhelming ab-

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solutism and the resolute determination of Louis XIV. But this was Brittany, the land of the past, the oldest corner in Europe. Things moved slowly in that province. The King was loved more and feared less there than in any other part of France. Conservative, tenacious, yet loyal, the people could not be shaken from their ancient faiths, nor moved to abandon their customs, hallowed by long antiquity, because the rest of the world had forgotten them. There the sixteenth century, its ideas and ideals remained unshattered by the iconoclasm of the eighteenth.

Furthermore, de Chabot's great wealth, his princely connections, his wide influence and his distinguished services—for he had been a soldier whose name was associated with some of the greatest victories of his warlike monarch—had insured him an indulgence which had sufficed to prevent any interruption of his habits, and to preclude any very strict inquiry into his course. In short, he was tacitly allowed to live as it pleased him. He was an old man with but little time left him, and it would all soon end at best.

His only son, the young Comte de Rohan—and save de Kersaint almost his only relative—had married Mistress Anne Page of Virginia. The young man had been a naval officer whose ship had been stationed upon the coast of North America, where he had greatly enjoyed the spontaneous and warm-hearted hospitality of the colonists of the famous Old Dominion. Carried away by her charms of mind and person, and without waiting for the con-

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sent of his father, he straightway married this young woman from the New World whose beauty and character had made so deep an impression upon him; and he had brought her to France in his own frigate.

His father, at first highly incensed at what he deemed a *mésalliance*, had sternly refused to receive him; but the tales of the beauty of his unwelcome daughter-in-law, which were poured in his ear by those who fell under the sway of her loveliness, and certain substantial evidences of the great estates in the New World belonging to the honourable family from which she sprang, and to which she was sole heiress, which his son had found means to bring to his attention, had first awakened his curiosity and finally mollified his wrath. He had at last consented to an interview, and thereafter had promptly succumbed to the charms of the winsome and beautiful American as completely as had his son. Resigning his commission in the French navy the young count with his wife, overjoyed at the reconciliation, had returned to his father's house and, as he fondly hoped, settled down to years of domestic bliss and tranquility.

There a daughter, the first and only child of this strange union, was born; but the life that came was paid for by the life that went, for when the child was but a few days old, the young mother died. The inconsolable young count did not long survive the loss of his adored wife. To distract his grief he resumed his service in the French navy, receiving his old rank through his father's influ-

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ence, and was shortly after wrecked and lost with his ship on a voyage to the French East Indies, while his daughter was still an infant.

It was a crushing blow to the old man, but with Spartan resolution he bore up under it and turned to his little grand-daughter for comfort and consolation. As the days sped away the child intrenched herself more and more in the old man's heart. He withdrew himself from the world in which he had been so great and gay a figure and devoted himself assiduously to her welfare.

Little Anne, Countess de Rohan in her own right, lived alone with her grandfather in the old Château de Josselin. Save when unavoidably called away on business connected with the management of his great estates he rarely left her. He watched over her with the solicitude of a mother and the devotion of a lover. The withered old man grew to love her as few children were then loved—certainly with such a feeling as few Frenchmen of rank at that day ever exhibited toward a child. She was the sole heiress to all his possessions, the last of that branch of her ancient house, and he lavished upon her a depth of tenderness and a wealth of affection which surrounded her with an atmosphere of adoration.

Loath to part with her, instead of committing her education to one of the great conventual schools, as was the custom among the noblesse of the country, he supervised it himself. Her growing mind afforded him new food for wonder daily, her present engrossed his mind, her future filled his

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dreams. As he was one of the most accomplished gentlemen of his time, and had been a man of the world in the highest and best sense of the word, she received such training as had not often been bestowed upon a young demoiselle of France.

In but one particular, indeed, the old man's scheme of education, in the carrying out of which he was assisted by the best masters that money could procure, might have been deemed faulty. The marquis, as he grew old, lived more and more in the past—and as he went backward in time he took the little maid back with him.

The same strange fancy which led him to restore mediæval usages and customs as far as possible, and which made his favourite study the ancient tales of chivalry, the stories of the hardy adventurous knights like the great du Guesclin, some of whose blood indeed ran in his veins, gave an unusual turn to the thoughts of his grand-daughter. She, like him, was steeped in the romantic lore of ancient days. The traditions of their ancient house, the deeds of daring, devotion, and courage which had made the de Rohans illustrious, were as familiar to her as fairy tales and childish rhymes are to other children. Her own maidenly vision dimly comprehended the future through the windows of the past.

Knowing nothing of the life of the world around her, she gazed from the tower windows of the castle over the leagues of tossing sea, and dreamed vague dreams of shining knights coming from far away to break lance and spear in her

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honour; to crown her Queen of Love and Beauty, after deeds of daring to which the minstrels and troubadours would give as wide a fame as they would spread the story of her virtues and beauty. The world of her mind was very different from the real one in which by-and-bye she must needs live, but no one had ever told her of the difference. And this creature of quaint contradictions was yet but a child after all, more often playing with dolls in the intervals between her studies and her dreams than anything else. The dolls at least were real, and though she should have outgrown them, instinctively, in default of better things, she still clung to them. She was romance wanting a touch; the sleeping beauty, expectant even in dreams; the potential flower waiting the kiss of the sun.

It was to this ancient château with its suggestion of history, its atmosphere of romance, and its Breton wild rose, scarcely reaching the dignity of a bud yet, but still inclosed in the soft calyx of innocence and inexperience, that Grafton was brought at the request of de Kersaint through the complaisance of the marquis.

It was evening when the two gentlemen, attended by a numerous retinue, rode up to the great gateway. The few miles that intervened between Brest and the Château de Josselin had been passed in animated conversation, and the acquaintance which had begun on the decks of *Le Thesée* under such strange auspices, had ripened into a pleasant intimacy. The dashing young American sailor had been attracted by the evidences of culture, the keen

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but kindly humour, the rich stores of knowledge, possessed by the marquis; and the latter had been touched by the pleasant deference and open frankness, as well as the shrewd common sense and graceful manner, of his young companion.

When they arrived before the gate of the castle as the sun had set the drawbridge was raised. As they waited for it to be lowered in answer to the marquis' hail, the young man remarked that it all seemed quite mediæval, fitting in appropriately with the wild surroundings and the barren shore.

"Monsieur," answered the marquis gravely, as if fearing a covert jest, "I keep, so far as I can, the state of my forefathers. This is my domain," he continued, as they rode through the ranks of the guards who had been paraded underneath the great gateway, and who were dressed in quaint outlandish costumes which reminded Grafton of the pictures in some old book, "this is my castle, these my retainers. Here my will is law. Within these walls I am supreme, saving only the feudal rights of my over-lord and master, His Most Christian Majesty, whom God preserve. While you are here, monsieur, the castle is yours. You are free to come and go where you will within the walls, and should you not attempt to pass the gate, you will find nothing to remind you that you are a prisoner. So securely guarded is my castle, Monsieur Grafton, that I do not even ask you for your parole. You hear, Jean-Rénaud?" he added, turning to the sergeant of the guard, "Monsieur Grafton is an American gentleman who honours our poor house by

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accepting its hospitality. Mark you—and you too, monsieur, pray give heed—he is free to go anywhere but over the walls or through the gate. See to it, Jean-Rénaud, that in no case is he allowed to escape. You will forgive the necessity for these orders, Monsieur Grafton, but I am responsible for you. The chatelaine?” he added, turning again to Jean-Rénaud, “where is she?”

“She has retired, Monsieur le Marquis,” answered Jean-Rénaud, “not knowing that you were to be here this evening. Shall I go——?”

“It is my wish that she be not disturbed, Jean-Rénaud. Come, captain, let us enter. Supper and a bottle of wine after our long ride will doubtless be as acceptable to you as to me. Allow me to precede you, monsieur—only to show you the way in these old halls, of course.”

After partaking of a generous repast in the ancient banqueting-hall of the castle, Grafton, now attended by Jean-Rénaud, was shown to a huge room, richly and comfortably furnished, the windows of which overlooked the garden. He was informed that this was to be his own chamber during his sojourn at the castle. Tired out by the trying experiences of the day, and invited thereto by a great old-fashioned, comfortable-looking bed, the young man immediately retired and soon sank to rest.

CHAPTER V

THE CRADLE SONG

“ You say we have a visitor, Josette? ”

“ Yes, mademoiselle, so Jean-Rénaud says. ”

“ An English gentleman? ”

“ Jean-Rénaud thinks so, because he certainly is not French. ”

“ Yet you say he spoke French to Jean-Rénaud when he put him to bed? ”

“ Yes, mademoiselle. ”

“ Good French? ”

“ Not good French like our Bas-Breton people speak, but—— ”

“ Like my grandfather speaks, I suppose. ”

“ Yes, something like that, Mademoiselle Anne. ”

“ And he is a great, tall, red-faced old man, I suppose? ”

“ Oh, no, mademoiselle, not at all. He is rather small. ”

“ Smaller than my grandfather? ”

“ Yes, and slender—— ”

“ Oh! A little baby man, then? ”

“ Wrong again, mademoiselle. He looks very active, hardy, and strong. He is bold; he has the grand air, the noble manner, and—— ”

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“ Did Jean-Rénaud tell you all this, Josette? ”

“ No, mademoiselle, ” answered the maid, disconcerted by the direct interrogation of her young questioner, “ I—I—saw him when he came in, and while they were at supper I peeped through the door. ”

“ Monsieur le Marquis would be very angry indeed if he knew that, Josette. ”

“ Yes, mademoiselle, I know—— ”

“ But what did he look like? ”

“ Handsome! Hein! His hair curls, ’tis very blond—and his eyes! Ciel! Blue, blue like the sea, mademoiselle, and his cheeks red—— ”

“ *Mon Dieu! Quel beau chevalier!* You must be in love with him, Josette! ”

“ No, mademoiselle! Nay, ’tis not for the likes of me—— ”

“ True, true, ” said the young chatelaine gravely. “ He is a noble knight, doubtless. He had red cheeks, you say? ”

“ Yes, mademoiselle. ”

“ Not like my pale ones, I suppose; but then the English always were gross and red in the cheek. ”

“ But, mademoiselle—— ”

“ That will do, Josette, you weary me with this stranger. Did you bring the new dolls? ”

“ Here they are, mademoiselle, ” said the faithful Josette, producing two elaborately dressed Parisian dolls from beneath her apron. “ They came by special messenger from Paris last night after you had retired. ”

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“Oh,” exclaimed the young girl, rapturously, “how beautiful they are! I thought I had about done with dolls, but these are so lovely. What grand dames they are! Give them to me, Josette.”

“How kind of Monsieur le Marquis, mademoiselle,” answered the maid, who was also the foster sister and youthful confidante of the countess, as she handed her the two dolls.

“Yes, surely,” replied the little girl, “but then he’s always that. He’s so kind that I almost wish he would be cross with me sometimes. I think I’ll marry somebody that he won’t like just to make him angry.”

“Jean-Rénaud says,” answered Josette, shuddering in anticipation, “that Monsieur le Marquis is terrible when he is angry.”

“Dear me!” said the child, “I should not like him to be terrible—just nicely angry. Do you suppose the Englishman will be terrible when he’s angry?”

“They say the English always are—but this one doesn’t look like it.”

“Oh, do you know,” said the capricious little maiden, “these are beautiful dolls, but I don’t believe I like them after all as much as old ‘Tôto.’”

“I brought her along, too,” returned Josette, producing her from a pocket in her dress, “I thought you might want her, mademoiselle.”

“Oh, give her to me!” exclaimed the young mother, extending her hand to take the old rag

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affair, "I am tired of walking and talking, Josette. You are so very uninteresting this morning. You can't speak of anything but that Englishman! Let's sit down here under this beech-tree and sing the dolls to sleep. You take the two from Paris. We'll play they're twins, and I will take poor old Tôto. She shall not be neglected for the beautiful ladies from the city, shall she? Poor old Tôto! I shall never have any more dolls, Josette. I certainly am too old for them. If it were a real baby, now, or a knight," continued this small bundle of inconsistencies, "how I would love it! But that is not to be. Hélas, Josette! Come, let us put them to sleep."

"But, mademoiselle, 'tis early morning—" responded the unimagative peasant.

"Stupid, we can play 'tis night, can't we? Besides, it's always good for children to take a nap. Grandfather says 'the more sleepy the eye in the daytime the brighter the eye at night.' You sit there, and I will sit here. Now, sing."

The two children, with that delightful indifference to rank and station which constitutes one of the charms of childhood, sat down on a rustic bench under a handsome old beech-tree. Though both were about the same age, just entering their teens, Josette, who was the younger, would have made two of her young mistress. She had already reached her growth, apparently, for she was tall and large, and her splendid physical development was well set off by the picturesque dress of the Breton peasantry. Her mistress, on the contrary, was

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small, slender, fragile, undeveloped, and physically as much behind her maid as mentally she was her superior. A greater contrast between them could not have been imagined.

“What shall we sing, mademoiselle?” asked Josette. “Shall it be *The Fox Gallant*?”

“No, we’ll sing *Toutouie, la, la!*”

“Very well, will you begin?”

“No, you.”

“Very well. Are you ready?”

“Yes.”

“So, then.”

Humming the air for a moment, the two voices broke into the plaintive melody of an old Breton cradle song, the refrain of which gave it a title. In default of a rocking-chair—not then indigenous to France—the two bodies swayed back and forth in time to the simple lullaby, or *berceuse*, the wooden sabots on one pair of large though shapely feet patting the ground in time with the dainty jewel-buckled Louis Quinze slippers upon the other. The words were primitive and childish as befits folk song at its best, and more especially at its beginning in the cradle song, and the music was equally so; yet the emphatic word was repeated at the end of each verse with a long-drawn cadence, and the *Toutouie, la, la!* rose above the branches with a caressing intonation which a mother might have used to a child.

Every little girl is a potential mother, and when she plays with her dolls she is following an instinct everlastingly feminine and as old as religion. The

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doll is the outward and visible expression of that incarnate racial idea which, through the sacrifices involved in reproduction, leads humanity to its greatest height.

And so the song was at one and the same time eternally old and eternally new. The rude words were perhaps of little consequence beside the idea, yet there was a significance in the primitive and poetic phrases of the common people. Poetry, too, begins with children, and the true font Pierian is the mother's breast—

*" Toutouie, la, la ! my little child,
Toutouie, la, la ! Toutouie, la, la !*

*" Thy mother, my little one, is here,
So hush thee, hush thee, baby dear,
Toutouie, la, la !*

*" So hush, my lamb, my song I'll keep
To lull my little one fast asleep,
Toutouie, la, la !*

*" Thy mother's life was dark and sad,
Ere thou cam'st to make it glad,
Toutouie, la, la !*

*" My bird thou art and thou canst rest,
Here in the rose tree of my breast,
Toutouie, la, la !*

*" Spread not, my bird, to heaven thy wings,
'Tis heaven here, when mother sings,
Toutouie, la, la !"*

The gentle air of the summer morning rustled the leaves of the old beech-tree in a not inharmoni-

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ous accompaniment to the melody and swept the sound into the dull ear of a drowsy man. Philip Grafton had forgotten himself in the great bed of the large chamber above the beech-tree. He lazily opened the curtains of the bed as the sound came faintly into the room, and the flood of light which poured upon him completed his awakening. He lay listening a few moments, and then rose and leisurely walked to the window.

It was a heavenly morning. The breeze, laden with the sweet fragrance of summer, blew softly across his face through the casement. An enchanting garden, which might have boasted the supervision of the famous Le Nôtre himself, lay spread before his eyes. Half concealed by the interlacing boughs of the tree he could detect two figures beneath the window, sitting on a bench under the shadow of the beech.

He watched them. They were singing. That wild, plaintive, yet primitive chant came from the two little girls there. The deeper contralto tones of the peasant girl afforded a sweet accompaniment for the girlish treble of the other. The birds twittered in the trees of the garden, and a gay robin on a branch near the window poured out his brave little soul in brilliant bursts of song. It was a chorus of nature harmonizing with the natural song of motherhood, which seemed not inappropriate though issuing from the lips of children.

“*Toutouie, la, la!*” What was the queer little refrain? He leaned far out over the window-sill

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and listened to the singers. He was wont to be awakened by the creaking of the timbers of a heaving ship, and the experience of this morning was as novel as it was delightful. It was interrupted, however, by a knock upon the door.

CHAPTER VI

EXIT DOLL—ENTER KNIGHT

AT the sound of Grafton's voice directing him to enter, Sergeant Jean-Rénaud, who was accompanied by a slender youth in the livery of the house, opened the door.

"Monsieur is awake?" asked the sergeant, stepping over the threshold and saluting respectfully.

"As you see, sergeant."

"Monsieur slept well?"

"Very well."

"Monsieur wakes early."

"Yes, that song there—" pointing to the window, "do you not hear it?"

"'Tis mademoiselle and Josette," answered Jean-Rénaud; "she will be annoyed to think she has disturbed——"

"On no account tell her! Say nothing about it to any one, my good friend. 'Tis delightful! What sing they?"

"A cradle song, monsieur," answered the sergeant. "My old mother sang me to sleep with that song, and thousands of other mothers in Brittany have sung it as well. *Toutouie, la, la!*" He caught up the refrain, and in a deep though not unmusical voice hummed the air.

Exit Doll—Enter Knight

“’Tis a pretty song,” said Grafton.

“Yes, monsieur, but if you are ready to dress, I have brought Anatole, who is at your service while you are a pris—while you honour our house,” he added, with native politeness. “He will serve monsieur. And Monsieur le Marquis bids me say when you are ready he will be pleased to attend you at breakfast. Monsieur realizes that he is—is—while he is within the walls he——”

“I remember everything, my good friend,” replied Grafton, “within the walls I am free, outside, a prisoner.”

“Provided, of course, monsieur gets outside,” answered Jean-Rénaud smiling. “Has monsieur any commands for me?”

“None,” replied Philip as the old soldier withdrew. The deft Anatole, who seemed familiar with the habits of Englishmen, quickly arranged a bath, laid out a uniform from his new master’s wardrobe—for his personal baggage had been sent him through the kindness of de Kersaint—and then withdrew. Hastily Philip dressed himself—and yet with unusual care, by the way—and descended to the hall. Finding the door open he entered the garden.

The song had ceased and the two maidens, the dolls lying neglected in their laps, were engaged in earnest conversation.

“And you think,” he heard the smaller say, “that he would be my knight?”

“Mademoiselle, he is there!” exclaimed Jo-

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sette, springing to her feet in much confusion, as she observed Grafton's approach.

The other girl turned her head slightly, saw him advancing, and as if to mark the difference between the mistress and the maid, rose slowly and calmly to her feet. In spite of her dignity her little heart was beating furiously. The dolls fell neglected to the ground. The end of their reign began that morning.

Grafton bowed profoundly before her, and as she returned his salutation with a sweeping courtesy, he looked curiously at her. So this was the Breton rose! She was a small, slender, pale little girl, between thirteen and fourteen years old, and rather delicate in appearance. Too old to be playing with dolls, certainly. Her head was crowned with a mass of hair black as a raven's wing, which fell down her back in a heavy braid tied with a scarlet ribbon. A pair of rather long arms terminating in long slender hands stretched from her immature sloping shoulders. Below the short skirt of her dress two long thin legs dropped into dainty slippers.

Philip was something of a connoisseur and he scanned her carefully and swiftly. Her eyes, he thought, were good, and blue he could see in spite of the downcast lids—a strange combination of black hair, pale face, and blue eyes, unusual but striking. Her hands were small, he noticed, and her feet, even then, charming. As for the rest that would come in time. She was a maiden of much promise he decided.

Exit Doll—Enter Knight

“Mademoiselle,” he said respectfully, “have I the pleasure of addressing the Chatelaine of Josse-
lin, the young Countess de Rohan?”

“Yes, monsieur,” answered the girl simply, lifting her eyes to his as she spoke.

He started in surprise before their deep violet splendour—the eyes of a woman in the face of a child. Good heavens! They were glorious—decidedly this was promising.

“You are the English milord?” she queried gravely.

“Neither the one nor the other, mademoiselle,” he answered, smiling at her frank question. “I was born in America.”

“Ah!” cried the girl brightening, “my mother came from there. ’Tis a great land.”

“The greatest the sun shines upon, mademoiselle,” gravely answered Grafton.

“Except France, monsieur.”

“Except France, little lady, since you are here,” he returned gaily.

“And monsieur is not a lord?”

“There are no lords in America.”

“Not even a knight?”

“Not yet, unless I may be your knight, mademoiselle.”

“You hear, Josette?” cried the girl, turning delightedly to the other, “we won’t have to play any more that you are a knight. Monsieur says he will be my knight. So few gentlemen come here, monsieur; we see no one,” she went on, with a stateliness and ease which quite belied the ragged doll

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at her feet, the Parisian dolls by her side, the short dress, and general air of unformed and undeveloped womanhood about her. "Monsieur le Marquis is here, of course. And Monsieur de Kersaint, who was a friend of my father's, comes sometimes, and the masters of the dance, and the masters of the music, and the masters of the art, and all the other tiresome masters, and Jean-Rénaud, so that I am glad to find a gentleman—Monsieur is *gentile*, of course?"

"I hope so, mademoiselle. I trust mademoiselle may find me so at any rate."

"Monsieur looks so. Is it not so, Josette?" frankly continued the child.

"Oh, indeed, yes, mademoiselle!" exclaimed the embarrassed but acquiescent maid.

"I do not doubt monsieur's breeding, but a maiden, motherless like I, monsieur, must be very careful how she takes a knight without finding out all about him, you see. Monsieur's family is old?"

"Very old, mademoiselle," answered the young man, smiling at the little comedy.

"Monsieur is an American, and America was only discovered—let me see—'tis scarce three hundred years since, is it not, Josette?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, certainly," answered Josette, still agreeably concurring, although she knew nothing about it.

"But my family was English long before that time, mademoiselle," answered Grafton, "and Norman before that."

Exit Doll—Enter Knight

“ Oh, you are part French then? ”

“ My heart is all French, at least since I have met you, mademoiselle. ”

“ Now, that is nicely said. You are *très gentile* indeed, sir, and your family is old—not as old as the de Rohans, though. ”

“ Mademoiselle, is anything so old or so beautiful as the de Rohans? ”

“ As to the age, monsieur, there is no doubt, but as to the other, there are only grandfather and myself left, and I am sure he is not beautiful, though he's very wise, and so good to me that I think him lovely. As for me, ” she regarded herself mournfully, looking from her dainty feet at her long bony legs, her flat chest—she even seemed introspectively to be surveying her own countenance in the mirror of her memory. She shrugged her shoulders at last, and Philip interrupted her meditations by saying:

“ Mademoiselle, I think you charming. ”

“ But you, monsieur, ” she responded, “ if you are to be my true knight and servitor, must think me beautiful. Knights always do that in the books, you know. ”

“ 'Tis an easy task your ladyship lays upon me, ” he replied gallantly. “ If I am set to no more difficult undertaking than that to prove my devotion, I shall be lightly treated. ”

“ Oh, of course I shall find you harder things to do than that. I can not have a knight who will not do great things for me. Now, you, monsieur, ” surveying him doubtfully, “ are not so large as

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—as—Jean-Rénaud or the Comte de Kersaint, for instance.”

This frank remark nettled Grafton, who was rather sensitive as to his size.

“But you will find that I am very strong, nevertheless, my young friend,” he said rather abruptly. “See!”

He stepped forward, and before she knew what he intended to do, he seized her slender waist in both hands and raised her easily from the ground.

“How dare you!” she screamed, red with sudden indignation. “Put me down at once, sir! I never heard that Sir Lancelot, or Amadis de Gaul, or Bertrand du Guesclin ever presumed to take such liberties with their ladies! They worshipped them from afar, sir! But I see how it is; you think I am only a little girl, and I won’t have it! I’d rather have Josette for a knight!” cried the Chateleine of Josselin, stamping her pretty feet and repressing a violent inclination to burst into childish tears.

“I humbly beg your Highness’ pardon,” said Philip, amazed at this outburst. “I only wanted to show you at least how strong I was, in order that you might deem me worthy to be your knight. I should not have dared to do such a thing. I see now it was very wrong. I humbly apologize to you. Forgive your faithful servitor. Is there not some way in which I may atone—a dragon I can slay for you?”

“Now you are laughing at me,” she said, much mollified, nevertheless. “There are no dragons

Exit Doll—Enter Knight

nowadays. At least Josette says there are, but I never see any. But must knights have dragons?"

"Not necessarily, I believe, although they are desirable; but am I forgiven?"

"If you will promise never to do it again," she replied in her loftiest manner, "I shall overlook it this time."

"And may I not have a token of forgiveness?"

"You may kiss my hand," she said, extending her little brown paw.

Choking with laughter Grafton bent over it, and was much surprised when she added:

"In all the books I have read, monsieur, the knight always kneels when he kisses his lady's hand."

"What would the ward-room mess on the Torbay say if they could see me now?" thought Philip, as he obediently dropped to his knees and pressed a fervent kiss upon the extended hand.

"That's very nice," said the delighted girl naïvely, "I am so glad you came. We never have any gentlemen here—but how old are you, monsieur?"

"Twenty-five."

"Mercy!" she exclaimed in some dismay, "that's almost twice as old as I am! Perhaps you are too old; but no, you will have to do. Now, you may rise," she continued, striking him gently on his shoulder with the tips of her fingers. "This is my royal—what do they call it? Dear me, you are so stupid, Josette, you never know what to tell me!"

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"Accolade, is it not?" answered Grafton, rising to his feet.

"Yes, that's it. You know all about it, too. Now I ought to give you something for a *gage d'amour*. Let me see—I'll give you Toto. Yes, that will be excellent," she added, picking up the doll.

"Well, I should hardly consider it an appropriate token, mademoiselle. You see, ladies do not often give their babies to their knights. Now, that ribbon on your beautiful raven tresses——"

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed the girl, pulling off the ribbon. "Annette, who does it up, calls it an 'awful mop,' but you are ever so much nicer. Are all knights so lovely?"

"By no means," answered Philip. "I feel that I have rare abilities which fit me to act in this capacity."

"How beautifully he talks, Josette!" said the little maiden. "Why, even Monsieur le Marquis uses no longer words! There!" she cried, fastening the ribbon to the buttonhole of his coat as she spoke, "now you are my true knight until——"

"Until I take you away on a pillion to the wars."

"Yes, wouldn't that be charming!" she cried. "But now you must tell me your name."

"Philip Grafton."

"I shall call you 'Sir Philip.'"

"That will be delightful. And your name?"

"Is Anne."

"I shall call you 'Lady Anne.'"

"Yes, never forget it. I am going to have

Exit Doll—Enter Knight

longer skirts in a year, perhaps, and then it will be more—real—you know.”

“Nothing could add to the appropriateness of the title, not even a trailing skirt, and I constitute myself, with your gracious permission, Lady Anne, your chosen knight. Oh that I had a spear and there was somebody here to say that you were not the most beautiful damsel in Brittany! Perhaps, Josette, you would like to dispute with me that title?”

“Oh, no, monsieur, certainly not!” answered Josette, shrinking back against the tree-trunk as if she already saw his spear point at her breast.

“Ah, here comes Jean-Rénaud!” he continued. “Well, monsieur sergent, will you break a lance with me in honour of Mademoiselle de Rohan?”

“Sir?” cried Jean-Rénaud in great surprise.

“I maintain that she is the most beautiful lady in Brittany.”

“In the world, Sir Philip, you should say, unless there is some beautiful English lady who has your heart.”

A shade of anxiety swept over the youthful face at this thought, which was at once dispelled by his perfectly truthful answer:

“There is no English or any other lady except you, beauteous princess.”

“How nice that is! I think you are the nicest knight I ever dreamed of.”

“Thank you. Now, Jean-Rénaud, shall we repair to the tilt-yard?”

“Monsieur mystifies me,” answered the old sergent.

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“ You agree, then, that mademoiselle is the——”

“ Why, monsieur, we are all devoted to mademoiselle,” responded Jean-Rénaud simply. “ Is it a game monsieur plays? If so, we are all her servants.”

“ No, no, Jean-Rénaud, I will have no knight but Sir Philip!” cried mademoiselle.

“ You seem already to have made the acquaintance of my grand-daughter, Captain Grafton,” interrupted the marquis, turning the corner of the house at the moment.

“ Acquaintance, Monsieur le Marquis? She has done me the honour to constitute me her royal knight, and I am trying to induce Jean-Rénaud to break a spear in her behalf.”

“ Will he not make a proper knight, grandpa, this English gentleman?” asked Anne, fluttering to her grandfather.

“ Proper knight indeed, my child,” answered the old man, humoring her mood as he fondly kissed her, “ and I congratulate you. Meanwhile let us descend from the romantic to the material. Breakfast is served. Monsieur Grafton, will you take your little lady and precede me? *C'est bien*,” he soliloquized, taking a pinch of snuff as he calmly surveyed the young man and the little girl walking ceremoniously toward the door. “ A pretty piece of play. I shall take care it stops in sport. The thorn watches the rose. Anne de Rohan mates with no foreigner, much less with an enemy.”

CHAPTER VII

IN THE OLD WATCH-TOWER

GRAFTON did not find the time of his imprisonment hang heavily on his hands. An only child, whose mother, like Anne de Rohan's, had died in his infancy, he had been early sent to sea. He knew but little of family life, therefore, and even less of children. Through his connections and influence he was not without some acquaintance with the high life of the court of England—a somewhat unusual privilege for a young naval officer—and he easily moved in the first circles in America when his duties permitted him a rare visit there. Mingling in this good society he had acquired an ease and manner which, added to his native breeding and instinctive dignity, enabled him to bear himself gracefully wherever he found himself—but he had no experience with young girls of the age of the young countess.

Fortunately his was a sunny, lively disposition, full of laughter and humour, which made it not difficult for him to enter into the spirit of the play in accordance with his new friend's fancies. He had been attracted in some strange way to the little de Rohan from the first moment he had seen her—nay,

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from that morning hour when he had only heard her in the garden—and the romantic friendship which she had instituted between them, and upon which he had entered to please her and as a pastime for a prisoner, unconsciously assumed a permanent aspect.

He took part in the play with a zest which surprised him, and the more he was thrown in contact with the strange and peculiar mind of the girl the more she interested him. She was a singular mixture of the young and the old, the very childish and the very wise. She stood, as it were, poised half-way between the intellectual level of Josette, her playmate, on the one hand, and of the courtly old marquis, her preceptor and guide, on the other.

She was too old to play at dolls, he thought, too young to play at love. And yet she had done the one and was doing the other, although the “adorable Tôto” had been neglected of late for the more adorable Philip. Shrewdness, wit, and common sense mingled in equal measure with unbounded credulity and the most romantic imagination. And her impetuosity and abandon were as evident as were her wisdom or her innocence.

There were no dragons, to be sure—at least they did not find any real ones—but the two, who were left greatly alone by the marquis whose many duties as vice-governor of the town took him frequently from the château to the city during those warlike times, easily evoked mythical ones from the crowded realms of their imagination, which they routed with great slaughter. Anne was crowned Queen

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of Love and Beauty a dozen times a day, and Philip as often distinguished himself by deeds of daring.

She read to him out of quaint old romances and furtively compared him with bygone heroes—not at all to his disadvantage either. They discussed sapiently of love and chivalry, the girl telling him many things of which he had never heard, while he unconsciously gave her intimations of the world of the present of which she was so ignorant—light touches which her quick mind appreciated and wove into the fabric of her dreams.

And in all this, she—both of them, indeed—did not forget to be children. In the climbing of trees, in the running of races, in the playing of games of all sorts with her and with Josette—who was not a little scandalized, by the way—for rivals, the young Englishman proved himself an adept. He had not had such fun since he was a boy.

One evening after Grafton had been a week a prisoner in the château, the marquis took it upon himself to discuss matters suggested by the growing intimacy between his grand-daughter and the young Englishman, thinking that possibly a word of warning, an intimation and an assurance might not be unnecessary.

“Monsieur,” he said after supper, “may I have a few words with you this evening? Mademoiselle Anne, you will excuse us, I am sure,” he added, waiting for her permission.

The old man was most punctiliously courteous to his little ward, and indeed to his prisoner as well.

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Had it not been for the walls and the gate, Philip would never have known that he was a captive.

“Certainly, gentlemen,” she answered with that assumption of the manner of the *grande dame* which sat so easily upon her immature shoulders and which Grafton so delighted to see, “I will withdraw.”

“Not so, my child, pray remain where you are. Monsieur Grafton will accompany me to my cabinet, and we will return here presently if you will await us.”

“My young friend,” said the marquis, when the two were alone, “you may have noticed that this is a strange house. There are few fathers who would permit their daughters so much freedom even within these walls as I have given my grand-daughter the young Countess de Rohan. She is all I have left, monsieur, and I have reared and educated her and shall continue to do so, upon a plan of my own. She is very precious to me, Captain Grafton; I have humoured and indulged her even when she wished to play the old game of chivalry with a stranger whom fate brought to our doors. Perhaps I have done wrong here, too, but she is only a child as yet. I had—I have a thought, monsieur, that it might be good for her to meet you freely. You are a gentleman, and of the world outside, of which I have purposely kept her in ignorance—yet she must know it some day.” He sighed as he thought of the contingency, and after a little pause, continued, “She has seen but few gentlemen of her own station in life; myself, Monsieur de Kersaint—in short, I have

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opened my house to you, monsieur. While you are a prisoner—forgive the word, my friend, with you I would fain forget the fact—it has become—what is your English word?—Ah, yes, your home! Monsieur, she is my only grand-daughter, my most precious possession. The heart, the life of an old man are bound up in her. I have trusted you, sir——”

“You shall never repent it, sir!” cried Grafton impulsively. “She is charming to me. I have known but little of children in my life and I find her delightful. And Monsieur le Marquis, if you knew me better, you would know that I would rather die than injure a hair of her head—of any child—of any woman, sir. ’Tis not the habit of America——”

“I know you well—better than you think, my young sir,” answered the old marquis, yet in spite of himself the relief in his tones was apparent. “I have not lived in courts and camps for so many years, dealing with men, without being able to judge them. And because I know you I have trusted you without exacting assurances.”

“Yet you warn me now, sir!”

“Monsieur, forgive an old man, ’twas for your own sake— This play of knight and dame—maiden is for France. She must mate with the highest.”

“Monsieur,” answered Grafton with a touch of hauteur, “here is no thought of mating. ’Tis a child’s play. Yet I would have you know, sir, that my family is among the oldest in England, my estates in America not less wide than these of the de Rohans in France.”

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“Enough, Monsieur Grafton,” replied the old man smiling, “we need not discuss the impossible. Mademoiselle is a child. You will soon be exchanged, I hope—for your own sake, not for mine. I shall continue to trust you and let her enjoy her play. ’Tis a compliment I pay you, monsieur. I know few young men, if any, in France, to whom I would grant so great a liberty.”

“I honour you, Monsieur le Marquis, for the privileges you have permitted me, and believe me, I shall not show my appreciation by any base ingratitude.”

“’Tis well,” returned the marquis, “let us re-join the chatelaine.”

Thereafter the little comedy-drama between the young sailor and the little girl was resumed with greater gaiety and abandon than ever. Grafton kissed the little brown hand so often that he rather grew to like it. Every day brought him a different love-token of some sort and a new and imaginary task to be achieved. But Mademoiselle Anne at last tired of simulation—the most obstinate imagination will weary in the end—and determined to endeavour to impart a touch of realism to the pretty game.

One day, therefore, she took him into one of the rooms of the high tower, the keep or watch-tower, the oldest part of the château, which he had never visited before. There she told him a tale of one of the ancient ladies of Rohan who had a lover who came from an alien and antagonistic family, who gained access to her chamber by climbing in

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some strange way the wall or face of the tower, until he reached the oriel window before them. He was finally caught and killed by the lords of the house on the threshold of the very room in which they were standing, she said, and she wondered if Sir Philip could, or would, have done that thing.

“Let us go to the window and look out, your little ladyship, and we will see,” answered the pseudo knight gaily. “I am a sailor. I can climb almost anything that any one else can ascend.”

Together and hand in hand the two stepped out on the little balcony overlooking the sea. Just outside the oriel window, the wall of the castle, following the coast line, turned sharply, making a narrow re-entrant angle where it joined the round tower. The tower and the wall were built of rough stone and their surfaces were much broken by jutting projections. The wall and tower sloped slightly inward from the base to the top.

Philip gravely surveyed the stone surface of the weather-beaten tower sweeping below the little platform on which they stood, and made up his mind that a daring climber taking advantage of the irregularities and projections in the stone, and favoured by the slope and the angle, might, if he had a cool head, gain the balcony, provided no one opposed his ascent. Indeed, since the Baron de Croisic, the unfortunate lover of the legend had done so, he felt sure that he himself could accomplish the feat—given a sufficient incentive, of course. At the foot of the tower lay the little bay spoken of before, and in the bay a small boat was moored.

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He looked again and more carefully, leaning far out over the wall, and with the trained observation of a sailor to whom the minutest indication may be of paramount value, he took careful note of the several projecting stones, the slope of the walls, and rapidly mapped out a series of movements by which the feat could be achieved.

“Yes,” he said at last, “it could be done; it would be difficult, dangerous, in fact, but it could be done—given a sufficient incentive.”

“Am I a sufficient—what is it you say? I know not that word, I think.”

“You are incentive enough for anything. Shall I try it?” he asked lightly.

The Countess Anne leaned out across the coping of the balcony, and looked down. It was indeed a giddy height. Her brain reeled as she gazed. She would like very much to put Sir Philip to the test, but in the end she decided not. He might be killed, and that would be a bitter end to their little play. She recalled that Monsieur de Croisic had been thrown down there after he had been caught in the tower. The height was appalling. She was too fond of Sir Philip. So she temporized. She was woman enough for that, he thought. Indeed, he realized that she had developed marvellously in the month he had been with her. She seemed years away from dolls now. He wondered why.

“Not to-day, Sir Philip; some other time, perhaps, but not now,” she answered him at last.

“As you will, Mistress Anne,” he replied indif-

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ferently, and then as a thought struck him he questioned her: "Why is this place not guarded, or the wall smoothed, so that no one could climb up again?"

"I suppose it was guarded once. As for the wall, the story I read said that the lords of the tower left it just as it was, for they thought that the lesson they had given poor de Croisic would keep everybody away. Would it keep you away?"

"Not if you were here waiting for me, Lady Anne. But why is it not guarded now?" he persisted.

"I can not tell. Nobody knows this story except myself and Josette to whom I told it, I suppose. I read it the other day in some old papers I found in the library room. I doubt if even grandfather remembers it or he would lock up the room. Besides, what need? There is no one who can make use of it now," she answered artlessly.

But it came into Grafton's mind that if it were difficult to climb up to that balcony window, it would be less difficult to climb down from it, and the idea of escaping sprang instantly into his head. Indeed, it had often been with him, but he had seen no way whatever to bring it about until that afternoon, that very moment in the oriel of that tower.

Beyond the rocky edges of the shore, to seaward, the horizon was dark with the sails of ships. It was the huge fleet of Boscawen lingering off the coast in the vain hope that something might draw the French out from Brest at that time and a general engagement might be brought about. If Graf-

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ton could gain that window at night, descend the wall, seize the little boat in the cove, he might reach the ships! He stood in abstracted silence gazing seaward until the girl laid her hand lightly upon his arm.

“Have you forgotten me, Sir Philip?” she questioned him jealously; “were you thinking of——”

“Of home for a moment, my child, of Old England, and a better-loved shore farther away. Those are English ships and—but never mind, we were talking of the lady’s lover. Yes, I can see how he might have come up the wall.”

“And of course I will not let you do that now because—but would you do it for me some day?” she asked anxiously.

“Some day, perhaps, I shall show you,” he replied. “I could do harder things than that for you. But come, let us seek the dragons in the garden, beauteous dame. ’Tis a long time since we have had an adventure of any sort. Call Josette for your court, and after the battle I shall crown you Queen of Love and Beauty again. I can beat you down the stair,” he added as they raced away.

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE PLAY

THAT night he determined to put in practice the attempt to escape, the first definite possibility of which had come to him that afternoon. Indeed, it had grown upon him with each passing moment. He lay awake for hours after he had retired and Anatole had been dismissed, waiting until the people in the château, except the guards at the gate and the watchmen on the walls, had all gone to sleep. And for a true knight his thoughts at least were recreant, since he dreamed not of the Lady Anne but of freedom.

Toward midnight he arose, dressed himself quickly, and softly stole through the deserted halls until he came to the unoccupied chamber in the round tower. No especial watch was kept upon him, no guards were stationed upon the tower and but few on the seaward side of the château. Moving circumspectly he had met no one nor had he attracted the attention of any sleeper.

He stepped quickly through the great room to the oriel. He stood for a moment on the balcony looking out to sea. It was a bright moonlight night. Away on the horizon twinkled the faint

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yellow lights of the English ships. Far below him in the shadow of the cliffs the waves were breaking in sullen splashing upon the splintered shore. He could hear the rhythmical persistent beat of their tireless assault upon the rocks, see the white water, shot with phosphorescent sparks, churned into foam over the reefs at the foot of the cliffs.

He hesitated as he surveyed the scene; although his purpose was unchanged, he realized as he had not before, that his undertaking was fraught with the greatest danger. He might reach the foot of the cliff alive or he might not. The chances were against him. Things looked differently in the night time. A slip, a misstep, a fall, and death would be the end, death on the rocks two hundred feet below, with the white foam for a shroud, and the ebbing tide to bear him far out to sea.

Yet he must needs go on. But as he made ready to descend, his thoughts suddenly went back to the little girl who had been his playmate during the past few weeks. He had almost forgotten her for the moment. Was he a recreant knight thereby? His conscience reproached him. Strange as it may seem, he felt a keen pang of regret when he realized that once he stepped over the balcony wall and essayed the descent he should be parted from her forever. In death or in liberty they would be equally separated. The little Rose of the Rohans—to see her no more! The thought gave him a peculiar feeling. He paused, reluctant. He was surprised at himself.

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The little maiden with her mingling of childish innocence and womanly charm had grown very dear to him, and the joy he anticipated in soon regaining his liberty was sadly dimmed by the certain sadness of that inevitable parting. Yet the feeling was not strong enough to deter him—then. It was deep enough, however, to give him pause. He lingered, thinking swiftly. It was duty that turned the scale—duty and love are antagonists of old.

He had learned something about the French fleet in Brest and the location of the defences in the harbour in his rapid ride through the town when he came to the château, and from his frequent although apparently cursory examinations of the position from the towers and walls he had learned more. His information would be of great value. He was an officer of the King, and when the possibility of escape presented itself, at all hazards he must make an effort to reach the ships. The marquis had spoken once or twice about exchange, but nothing had yet come from it and such matters were slow at best.

As it seemed more feasible, as the possibility approached nearer, his desire grew. The detaining image of the French girl grew fainter. Duty, liberty, freedom, action—what child could stand in the way? Therefore again he determined to attempt the descent. Yet it was a forbidding undertaking now that he had settled upon it. It had seemed easier in the daylight than at night time. The bend of the wall cast the corner in a black

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shadow, the more intense on account of the brightness of the moonlight beyond.

His mind was in a strange turmoil. Death—love—liberty—what would be the end? Pshaw! He would think no more, he would do it!

He climbed up on the stone railing of the balcony, turned his back toward the tower, slid along the coping stone until he could feel the angle between the walls with his hand, his shoulders touching either side of the angle. He held firmly to the coping of the balcony, which he determined not to let go of until he was sure of a foot rest. Then he stretched out his right leg and felt about in the shadow until finally his foot hit the first projection. He breathed a prayer and prepared to descend. He was glad the angle was in the shadow. He could not see what was beneath him. The black cliffs under his feet hid their terrors from him. He intended to try it with his face outward, his back in the angle, his hands and feet outstretched, clutching at or feeling for every inequality. He was about to let go. Another moment and he had gone, when he felt a familiar little hand laid upon his arm.

“Come back, come back, you will be killed!” whispered a small frightened voice. He was so startled in spite of the quietness of her address that he nearly lost his hold and fell. He recovered himself, however, by a prodigious effort, and aided by the girl’s nervous, clinging hands he drew himself up slowly, and swinging his legs back over the coping landed once more on the solid floor of the balcony.

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The idea of disregarding her summons did not once occur to him.

“Were you doing this for me?” asked the girl innocently, still clinging to him as if afraid to release him.

“Mademoiselle Anne!” he cried in great surprise and annoyance, “why are you here?” He was trembling violently from his exertions and the tense emotions of the past few moments.

“Why not, Sir Philip? You are here yourself, you see,” she answered unsuspectingly, approaching him and laying an innocent hand on his arm and looking steadily at him.

“Yes, but I—come into the tower,” he said drawing her back through the window into the room. How her eyes gleamed in the moonlight! What depths were there, what unfathomable mysteries lurked within their shadows! He had never seen them so before. They startled him—those eyes so softly tender, so deeply blue. And the exquisite pallor of that face framed in the misty blackness of her floating hair—the girl was beautiful.

Following him into the chamber she stopped unconsciously where the moonlight streamed in through the window. For the first time he noticed what she wore in the bright illumination. Apparently she was clad in her night-dress with a loose wrapper hastily thrown about her shoulders; her little bare feet gleamed like marble in the patch of white light on the stone floor. One hand hung by her side, with the other she instinctively gathered

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the wrapper across her breast with a movement at once modest yet charming.

“Why, you are in your night-robe!” he exclaimed in astonishment, but not raising his voice for fear of attracting attention. “Your feet are bare and on these damp stones! You’ll catch your death of cold! My dear child!”

He forgot that he was her knight, and stooping down lifted her slender form in his strong young arms. She half-struggled a moment and then acquiesced. What was he to do with her? The carpetless room was bare of furniture and, save for themselves, empty. He hesitated, stepped into the window, sat down upon the low sill, and set her on his knee, holding her firmly, carefully, tenderly. She, too, forgot that she was a lady, and nestled against him as any other child might have done.

“Now tell me,” he whispered—they spoke softly all the time—“why did you come here, Anne?”

It was the first time he had addressed her without a title.

“I do not know,” she answered. “I—my room is over there, you know. I couldn’t sleep. I was thinking about the Lady Jehane and her lover the Baron de Croisic—and about you, Sir—Philip.” The pause between the “Sir” and “Philip” was a long one, which sweetened the name in his ears as she continued, “I heard a sound and I thought it might be his ghost. So I came—I hurried too. I had no time to dress.”

“Were you not afraid?”

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"The marquis says the de Rohans are never afraid. I didn't like it, but I came on tiptoe, and then I saw something black outside on the balcony and I walked over there. I was a little afraid, I think, perhaps because I am part American," she added naïvely.

"Americans are never afraid, either," interrupted Grafton promptly.

"Well, anyway, I saw it was you and I was not afraid any more. And I watched you stand and look, and then I saw you get over the wall, and then I was fearfully afraid—for you, Philip. I thought you might be killed. I slipped out and caught hold of you, you came back, and now we are here—together."

There was a long pause. She slipped her arm about his neck and held him as if she feared again that he might fall. He scarcely knew what to say, so he held her close and kept silent until she spoke once more, drawing herself away from him a little as she did so. "I don't think knights carry their ladies around like this, do they? I don't think it's quite proper, is it? But these stones are so cold, and I forgot my slippers, I was so anxious. Is it all right, Sir Philip?"

She wriggled her pretty little toes as she anxiously sought for reassurance from her admirer and companion.

"Proper? Of course, and where is Josette?" he answered, glad to get back to the form if not the spirit of the play.

"Asleep," she answered, "the great stupid!

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She doesn't care whether there are any knights in the world or not. But what were you doing here? You have not told me yet."

"I—I—I thought I'd try—the tower, you know—the wall—to go down."

"Yes, and was it for me?"

For the life of him he could not lie to this confiding and innocent little girl.

"Lady Anne," he whispered, "it was for——"

But he did not seem to be able to tell her the truth either.

"Yes, Sir Philip, it was for——"

"For freedom then!" he said desperately.

"Oh!" she quivered, "and you were going to leave—me?"

There was a world of reproach in her voice and then silence. Presently he discovered that she was weeping. Her small frame shook with subdued sobs. The sight alarmed him, pained him deeply; he could not throw off a guilty feeling as he held her closely, trying to soothe and quiet her. He was desperately uncomfortable, yet the scene must be ended if he were to get away. He could meet her in laughter on a common ground, but sobs were foreign to his philosophy. He had not enjoyed experience of this womanly weakness, which is the weapon of the helpless, and he was powerless before her tears. He could not bear to see her cry, and suppose the marquis should see him, what would he think? Would he not conclude that Grafton had broken faith with him? And yet there was a passing sweetness in the situation too. He had no

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wish to terminate the interview; he forgot for the moment that he intended to escape that night.

"Now, my dear little girl," he began at last, "it's all play, you know."

This was a most unfortunate statement. All her youthful energies had been bent toward the obliteration of this bitter fact. That is a moment of the greatest sadness when we find out our hardly maintained realities have only been some other person's play!

"It's been play all the time," she sobbed impulsively. "I knew it was so! I tried not to believe it! Josette told me so, and I said she was stupid; but she knew more than I! You have been playing with me from the very first, haven't you? Let me go back to my dolls, monsieur, 'tis all I'm fit for."

She tried vainly to break away.

"My dear child," he replied, still holding her, but utterly at a loss to know what to do or say, "you see I——"

"You never were my really truly knight, were you?" she went on through her tears. "You never cared anything about me; you were just amusing yourself, weren't you? Making fun of a foolish little girl. Oh, monsieur, how could you? And now you are going to leave me!"

"Anne," he said at last, "you are only a little girl, and I am a grown man."

"Yes, I remember I said you were old for a knight, but you were all I had!" she wailed.

"But do you know," he continued, "it wasn't

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all play after all—not exactly—and if I lingered there on the balcony—if you saw me pause, it was because I did not wish to leave you. 'Tis truly so. Dear little lady, little playfellow and comrade, I am your knight and will be.”

“And is there no other lady in England or America? You said ‘No’ once, but was it true?”

“It was true and it is true; there is no lady in England or America, or anywhere in the world, for me, except in this little corner of France, and if I hesitated about going away, it was for you, but don’t you see? My duty—I am an English officer. My King is at war with yours. I must go back!”

“You love your country, monsieur, more than—but you do not love me at all, do you?” she asked piteously.

“Of course I do,” he answered promptly. “I love you very much indeed; you are the sweetest little girl I know.”

“Oh, the marquis loves me that way, and Jean-Rénaud, and Josette, and——”

“It’s different with me, you know. Not like that at all. You see, men do their duty because they ought to, and they love people because they have to.”

“Do you have to love me, Sir Philip?”

“Yes, and I am glad to, my dear little girl. I am afraid if I stay here any longer and you grow any older——” He hesitated; was he actually about to propose to this child? He resumed, rather tamely, “I just had to go away, you see. Now let

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me go, and some day I will come back to you and——”

“Put me down, monsieur,” she said gravely, with one of those swift changes of mood which he had often noticed before. “I insist upon it! There, you may go now, but you will never come back to me. I know it. You will be somebody else’s knight, and I——”

Her little head drooped forward. He lifted his hand to her chin, turned her face upward and kissed her, and then drew her nearer to his breast as he might have done a little sister. Yet it was not such a kiss as a brother might have given, nor was it a sister whose lips met his own. It was the first time he or any man had kissed her, save her grandfather, whose love did not express itself in frequent caresses. She was but a child, yet something thrilled and leaped in her heart at his touch, and there was a faint echo of her feeling, a brief response to her heart-throb, in his own breast.

But in a moment she broke from his arms—never again could he hold her so as before. She stood and looked at him from those glorious eyes of hers, and time, in one swift moment, in the meeting kiss, wiped out the difference in years between the two. His thoughts changed as he gazed upon her. A new idea came to him. In a few years she would have grown—why not?

“Monsieur,” she said at last, and the change in her was evidenced by the gravity and the added dignity of her manner, “you have kissed away the child. I am a woman; you can not go now.”

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“Why not, Mademoiselle Anne? I can love you—from a distance—for I swear, child or not, I love you—and I can come back.”

“Love has nothing to do with this, monsieur, now; I am a French woman. You must not go; you shall not! You are a prisoner. The marquis is absent. The castle is mine till he returns. I am the chatelaine. I could never look my grandfather in the face again if I allowed you to escape.”

“And how would you prevent it, Mademoiselle Anne?”

“By standing in your way, so!” she answered, stretching out her slender arms and barring the window with her slight figure. “A feeble barrier, you say; yet you were my knight—even though only in play—and I, at least, do not forget it. Gentlemen do not pass to freedom over the bodies of their ladies,” she continued quaintly.

“Ah!” he cried, looking at her with mingled pride and vexation, “I could brush you aside in a moment.”

“But you would not, Sir Philip,” she went on, lapsing into the old style of address. “Besides, I should scream, and then—and you can not go down those rocks at night. The danger—it would kill me—the thought hurts me here.”

She laid her hand innocently upon her heart.

“The baron of old did it,” he answered.

“Oh, yes; but he went for love.”

“And I for liberty.”

“And is liberty stronger than love, monsieur?”

“By Heaven, Little France,” he answered im-

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pulsively, calling her by a name which she loved to hear, "I know not if it be! I am afraid 'tis not, since——"

"Since what, monsieur?"

"Since I stay here with you," he replied decisively. "Now, you must go to bed. I want not your death upon my hands."

He stepped forward and lifted her in his arms again. She weakly protested, but allowed it. They both felt the end of the game had come, yet for the last time she indulged herself. To-morrow would see—nay, to-night saw her a child no longer. Yet she clung to the spirit of the play, the hardest to be lost of all the ideas youth cherishes.

"You promise me on your word of honour that you will not seek to escape when I am gone to bed, Sir Philip?" she asked, nestling against him, her arms around his neck, her head on his shoulder, as he carried her toward her chamber.

"I promise you, Lady Anne, on the faith of a knight—your knight."

"And you are not playing this time?"

"Not this time," he answered, setting her down at the door of the room. "Good-night," he added, pressing his lips as of old to the little brown hand.

"I trust you, Sir Philip," she answered. "Good-night, and we will never play together as we have."

"Yes, yes, to-morrow!" he cried after her, as she shook her head sadly and disappeared.

"Good God, man!" said Grafton to himself, as he sat down in his room to think it over, "you had

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a glorious chance for liberty, and here you had to indulge in theatrics with that little Rohan girl! And you are fool enough to be satisfied with the situation, my boy," he soliloquized. "Are you falling in love with a little chit of thirteen? And yet how she looked when I—— Pull yourself together, man! 'Tis time to get out of here—— Such a thing is preposterous—and impossible at best."

And yet he had lived long enough to know that it is always the impossible that happens when hearts are under consideration.

Fortunately it was only the next morning that the marquis came home with the welcome tidings for Grafton—or were they unwelcome after all?—that he was exchanged, that he was free to go that instant if he would.

"I am glad, Sir Philip," said Anne, weeping as she bade him good-bye alone in the tower-room, "that you didn't run away last night. You will be my knight in earnest and come back to me some day? You promise me?"

"Yes, in earnest," he answered, smiling, "and some day I shall come back, I promise you."

BOOK II
FOR THE EMPIRE OF THE WEST

CHAPTER IX

THE GENERAL'S HEART

FIVE years had elapsed since Philip Grafton left the Rose of the Rohans in tears, and a thousand leagues of ocean now divided him from the old Breton tower; five years filled with high endeavour and honourable enterprise. He had risen to the rank of post-captain some years since and had been successfully engaged in his profession in many seas. His father had died meanwhile and he was alone in the world. To no woman among the many who had looked love in his eyes had he given his affection, and his friends regarded him as a confirmed bachelor. Was he still dreaming of Anne? It is enough to say he had not forgotten her—perhaps that is all.

It was evening on the twelfth of September, 1759, a clear though moonless night. The wind fell as the sun set, and the ships slowly drifted up the river with the heavy flood-tide. On the shore to the left lay the camp of Bougainville. The white tents of the soldiery on the heights of Cap-Rouge could be dimly detected in the soft illumination

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from the irradiating stars overhead. Lights twinkled here and there on the heights, or moved along on the crest of the bluffs, showing that, as usual, the French were on the alert and watchful.

There was much unwonted but subdued bustle on the English fleet as well. Men were being paraded and mustered on the decks, arms and equipments looked to, ammunition pouches filled to repletion, and the haversacks and canteens of the men provided with food and water, for it was hardly known when and where they would get anything to eat after they left the ships.

Far down the river the distant lights on Cape Diamond were almost hidden in clouds of smoke, and the muffled yet continuous roaring of the heavy guns from Admiral Saunders' ships of the line and the batteries at Point Levis, with the answer of the French from the works at Beauport and the citadel of Quebec, told a tale of furious cannonade. The admiral was certainly doing his part. As he had promised, he would keep them busy at his end of the line.

Four bells in the first night watch had just been struck on the fifty-gun ship Sutherland, carrying the flag of Admiral Holmes, commanding the squadron off Cap-Rouge, when a boat was seen making its way through the water approaching the starboard gangway of the ship. Hails passed between the Sutherland and the approaching cutter.

“Boat ahoy!”

“The Porcupine!” promptly answered a rather

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small man in the stern-sheets of the boat, giving the name of the vessel he commanded and following his reply with the sharp command, "Way enough! In bows!"

As he spoke he motioned to a midshipman who sat beside him. Following his officer's direction, the helm was put over and the boat swept gently alongside the gangway, the men unshipping the oars at the same time.

"Leave a keeper in the boat and let the men go aboard the ship," continued the officer rising, "then have the boat dropped astern. You will follow me on deck, Mr. Robison," he added, as he seized the manropes and ran rapidly up the battens to the gangway.

"Good-evening, Captain Grafton," said the officer of the deck, removing his cap and bowing low to the newcomer as he stepped aboard. "The general has been asking for you."

"Ah, good-evening, Hatfield! You say the general is waiting for me? Where is he?"

"In the cabin yonder, sir."

"That's well. Will you have me announced?"

"Mr. Giles," said Hatfield, turning to his own midshipman, "present my compliments to the general and say that Captain Grafton is here to see him."

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the boy, touching his cap and springing aft toward the cabin.

"'Tis a fine night, Hatfield," remarked Grafton, as they stood waiting.

"Indeed yes, sir."

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“And a good time for our enterprise. I believe it is set finally for this evening.”

“I believe so, sir. The orders have been sent around to all the ships.”

“And time enough,” responded Grafton. “We can not stay in this cursed river much longer. Winter will soon be on us. Oh, by the way, you have no objections to my men coming on deck, of course?”

“None at all, sir,” answered Hatfield. “Both watches are on deck in anticipation of the expedition, and they will disturb no one. Let them go forward and make themselves at home.”

“The general’s compliments to Mr. Hatfield, and will Captain Grafton please come below in the cabin?” interrupted the midshipman.

“By the way, Hatfield,” said Grafton, as he turned to follow the midshipman, “where are Captain Rous and the admiral?”

“Below, sir, in the admiral’s cabin, supervising the details for the evening. Do you go with them, captain?”

“I believe that I am to have charge of the debarkation,” answered Grafton heartily; “would you like to go?”

“Indeed I would, sir.”

“Very well, I’ll speak to Captain Rous. I shall doubtless see you again in a few moments.”

Presently Grafton entered the cabin.

“Ah, Grafton, glad to see you!” said a tall, thin man seated at a table, who appeared to be very ill. “Prompt as usual, I see.”

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"You said nine o'clock, general, and you know we sailors can be quite as punctual as you gentlemen of the army—wind and tide permitting, of course."

"Well, captain, I—but stay! You will excuse us, Monckton, and gentlemen all, I am sure," said the general, turning to his most trusted subordinate and three or four staff officers with whom he had been in consultation, "I have something of a private nature to say to Captain Grafton, and with your permission—no, no, keep your seats!" he added, as he saw them rising, "we will withdraw to the inner cabin. You see, I have two rooms, Grafton, by the courtesy of Captain Rous, luxurious quarters for a soldier in the course of an active campaign."

The two men, bowing to the officers, who returned their salutations with elaborate courtesy, withdrew into the inner cabin. Motioning the sailor to a seat the general sank down on a transom, rested his elbow on the port-sill, leaned his head upon his hand, and gazed through the open port toward Cap-Rouge. Grafton did not presume to break the silence.

"Philip," he said at last, turning about and leaning forward toward his friend, "we try it tonight."

"Yes, James."

"And you are to have charge of the boats."

"Thank you for that."

"I wanted a good man upon whom I could depend. There must be no miscarriage here if we can

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help it. 'Tis our last chance. You saw Admiral Saunders, as I requested?"

"Yes, and he delays sailing for a short time longer, though he takes a great risk."

"A noble fellow!" exclaimed the young general heartily. "If we fail to take the town, I will ever bear testimony that our want of success was not due to any lack of co-operation on his part."

"Shall we succeed, think you, Wolfe?" asked Grafton.

"What think you of the prospects yourself?"

"I am a sailor, I know little of such things. Give me the deck of a ship and I am at home. I fear nothing there—unless it be a lee-shore—but on land I prefer your views."

"Shall we fail? God knows!" murmured Wolfe softly, half soliloquizing. "I tried to turn their flank on the Montmorenci and failed there. I tried a direct attack on the Beauport lines and failed again. This time I know not. The path's a poor one at best. A hundred men at the top might hold an army." There was another silence. "Fail!" he said suddenly, as if awakened from a dream. "Of course not! We shall not fail! We can't fail! Philip, I must have Quebec! And now, at that! 'Tis our last chance, and mine! 'Tis sure a hard fate, but this body of mine is done for. I may last for a few days longer, but my race is about run."

"Don't say that, James!" exclaimed his boy-

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hood friend, protesting even against the bitter assurance in his heart of the truth of the dying soldier's words.

"It isn't the saying, old friend, but the fact, that makes it hard to bear—and 'tis true. This poor frail body is not equal to the demands I have made upon it. If it carry me through to-night and to-morrow I shall say naught. Death may have its way. Peace, Philip! I know what you would say, but I know myself 'tis useless. I want to strike one good blow for old England before I go. I should like to see the Cross of St. George floating above Cape Diamond before—but we shall see. Stobo says the path is practicable. He's a canny Scot and should know what he's talking about. I have examined it carefully as we floated past it, and I believe that we can get up. Once let me get on those plains and I interpose between Montcalm and his base of supplies. He must fight, retreat, or surrender."

"'Tis easy to tell," answered Grafton, "what he will do then."

"Quite. He is a splendid soldier, as many of our poor fellows have cause to know—and a fighter always. I honour him."

"But suppose you get caught between Montcalm and Bougainville's men from Cap-Rouge, Wolfe?"

"The chances for their arriving on the field together are very remote, and we must crush the one who first makes his appearance. Then we can easily deal with the other."

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“Have you issued all the necessary orders?”

“All.”

“Have you thought of everything?”

“Everything but defeat. The men are to enter the boats about eleven o'clock,” he continued. “They are to row up the river as if to make a landing at Cap-Rouge and then return to the ships. When the tide turns and the ebb begins they are to drop silently down the river. The ships will follow after an hour’s interval. The boats will land the men at the designated point, and then go across to the other side and ferry over Burton’s troops, who will have marched there before this, I presume. Those are your orders, Grafton.”

“What then?”

“Then we will bide the issue. ’Tis a desperate hazard.”

“Ay, desperate indeed.”

“We play for a great stake, Grafton, and fortune has been so hard to us perhaps the tide may turn and luck may serve.”

“You are too wise a man to be lucky, Wolfe,” responded the naval officer.

“Well, perhaps the luck will be with England, then. In fact, it is. Two deserters from Cap-Rouge have apprised us that a flotilla of provision boats is to be sent down to Quebec to-night. We will be that flotilla.”

“Yes,” laughed Grafton, “and give the French such a breakfast as they will find it difficult to digest, I’ll warrant.”

“Quite so,” said Wolfe smiling. “But now that

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you have your official instructions, Philip, there is another thing I want you to do for me."

"Anything on earth, old friend."

"I know that, I know that," answered the soldier. "You have always been a friend to me since we were boys together in old England. No one could be truer or better than you have been."

"Oh, that's all right!" answered Grafton hastily, with the Anglo-Saxon inclination to the avoidance of a scene. "We have been friends since my father sent me to the English school, where we met. I was a little colonial lad from Massachusetts, and mighty lonely I was, Jimmie, until you took me up and championed me."

"But you fought your own battles, Phil."

"You saw that I had fair play, anyway. I'll tell you what it is, Wolfe, if your body only equalled your spirit, what a knight you would have been!"

"Well, it's about that body that I want to speak. As I told you, I am doomed. I shall never get back to England alive; the sickness upon me is mortal. The physicians have said so, and I feel that it is true. Look at me, you can see for yourself! If it were not for the fight I should be on my back now, and if I have to die I'd rather do it on the field yonder—after we have won, of course—but that's as God pleases. This is what I want you to do."

As he spoke the young general unbuttoned his waistcoat, loosened his tie, and drew from his neck a little gold chain to which was attached a golden locket inclosed in a tight leather case. He slipped

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the chain over his head, drew the locket from the case, opened it and held it toward the light. He looked long and earnestly at the picture it contained—the portrait of a young and lovely woman. Observing that his friend had considerably turned his head, he raised it softly to his lips. A single tear fell upon the ivory miniature as he closed the locket, slipped it back in the leather case and extended it to Grafton. Deep tribute of affection lies in the tear of a soldier—of a soldier like Wolfe.

“When you get back to England, old friend,” he said slowly, “I want you to give this to Katharine Lowther, and tell her how, the night before I—before the battle, I mean, I gave it to you in the cabin of the ship, and how I loved her to the end. I have sent my farewells to my mother and the rest by some who know them, but I lay this last duty upon you. Nay, man, slip it around your neck. ’Twill not hurt Kitty, ’twould not hurt any girl to have her portrait worn against so honest a man’s heart. And—” he hesitated, “don’t mention this to any one, and see that it does not leave your person until you give it to her. Now, Philip, we must go. Your hand, old friend, and good-bye.”

“God bless you, Jim,” answered Philip, his voice choking with emotion. “On my word I will tell no one of it, and no one shall see it or know it until I give it to Miss Lowther. I pledge you, old friend. But I won’t say good-bye. I hope to congratulate you to-morrow—in Quebec.”

CHAPTER X

THE BEGINNING OF THE HAZARD

SIX bells were striking on the Sutherland as Wolfe and Grafton came out of the cabin. As the sound of the mournful couplets rang out through the night the bells of the other vessels caught up the slow refrain and the sound was repeated from ship to ship over the dark river. The character of the night had changed slightly. Faint clouds were drifting athwart the star-lit heavens, and there were heavy banks to the southward which looked like rain.

“Will you show the signals, Admiral Holmes?” asked Wolfe, as he stepped on deck. “We are all ready, I believe, sir.”

“Very well, general,” responded the admiral, turning to Captain Rous and giving him an order. A moment later two lanterns were hoisted, one above the other, at the spanker-gaff end. The signal was immediately repeated throughout the squadron. Shrill whistles rang out as the boatswain’s mates of the different ships bawled out hoarse commands.

Instantly the soldiers and sailors came swarming to their stations.

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“Colonel Howe,” said General Wolfe, addressing an officer of the light infantry, who appeared at the head of his men, “after you have mustered your battalion will you explain to them that I have designated them to lead the way in the attack to-night? Choose a forlorn hope of twenty-four men to scale the heights, sir.”

“’Tis an honour indeed, sir, and I thank you,” answered the young officer, smiling with pleasure. “I myself will lead them.”

“I expected as much of you. Captain Grafton,” he said, turning to the sailor and resuming the formal method of public address, “will you see that your flotilla of boats is ready to receive my men?”

“I know it is, sir, but I will look again,” answered Grafton. “Captain Rous, may I take Lieutenant Hatfield in my boat to assist me?”

“Certainly,” answered Rous, a veteran sailor.

Followed by the delighted officer, Grafton sprang to the gangway and called for his gig. Meanwhile Howe was addressing the light infantry. When he called for volunteers every man responded, and it was difficult to make selection of the required number. Presently, upon Grafton’s assurance that all was ready, the men slowly filed down over the side and took their places in the boats. Taking his own boat the captain rowed from ship to ship, finding that all preparations had been made everywhere, and that boats filled with men and manned by stout seamen were already clustered under the lee of the ships where they could be

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screened from the observation of the French at Cap-Rouge.

By twelve o'clock, midnight, the embarkation had been completed, and as it was nearing the end of the flood the boats slowly put off from the ships and headed for Cap-Rouge, General Monckton being in charge and Wolfe remaining on the Sutherland for the present.

The flotilla approached close enough to Cap-Rouge thoroughly to awaken the attention of the troops of Bougainville, who sprang to their arms in expectation of the threatening attack. But the advance was stopped before they were near enough to engage. After some little manœuvring off the shore, the boats, as if deterred by the promptness of the French soldiery, rowed back to the ships and sheltered themselves under the lee of their broadsides again where they could not be seen. Once there, the men, without going aboard the ships, waited patiently for the turning of the tide.

At four bells in the mid-watch, or two o'clock on the morning of the thirteenth, Wolfe entered the heavy cutter which Grafton had exchanged for his gig, and gave the signal to shove off. Following the general's boat came the boats of the light infantry, and after them the rest of the flotilla.

It was darker than ever. The sky was filled with light fleecy clouds drifting rapidly across the stars, their wild motion, driven as they were by some upper current of air, only accentuating the stillness on the water. Hugging the opposite

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shore for a time the boats floated silently down the river with the young ebb. As they appeared to be unnoticed from the camp at Cap-Rouge and as their manœuvres excited no attention, oars were broken out and the boats crossed to the Quebec side, the seamen rowing gently as they passed rapidly down the river.

The men had received strict orders and they sat in the cutters and bateaux, which had been provided to supplement the ships' boats, in silence, broken only here and there by a whispered word or two among the officers aft or by the muffled rattle of the oars in the row-locks. The ebb was running stronger now and, with the current, but little work was necessary to enable them to reach the desired point in good time.

Wolfe, wrapped in a boat-cloak, for the air had grown chill, sat in the stern-sheets of Grafton's boat, half-reclining, his long legs stretched out before him. Grafton himself held the tiller. Midshipman Robison, Lieutenant Hatfield of the Sutherland, General Monckton, and one or two staff officers, made up the party.

Forward in the boat sat Captain Stobo, who had discovered the whereabouts of the landing-place while a prisoner at Quebec, and who had undertaken to pilot them in. By his side was a Scotsman, an officer of Frazer's Highlanders, who, in the Jacobite court of the Stuarts in France, had learned to speak French fluently. He had recently given his allegiance to King George and was to serve him well that night. Wolfe respected his

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own orders and said but little as they floated down the stream past the black frowning cliffs and the tree-clad hills.

There was a young man living in England then, named Thomas Gray, who was a great friend of Wolfe's; and a certain piece of poetry which he had written, and which was beginning to be much thought of there—and much more thought of since—came into the mind of the soldier as they drifted down the river. Perhaps he mused on the inevitable conclusion personally before him; perhaps, by one of these strange premonitions which seem sometimes to visit those doomed to die, there may have flashed before his mind in that still hour a vision of his triumph and of his end; the dawn already beginning with pale grayness “to lace the east” may have brought to his mind the “breezy call of incense-breathing morn,” and have suggested the poem. At any rate, he broke the silence by repeating some of the mystic, mournful lines. He spoke in a low whisper, half-soliloquizing, yet all in the boat could hear him.

The night, the silence, the broad bosom of the noble river, the towering cliffs close at hand, all impressed the intent listeners. Most of them were blunt soldiers or sailors, men bred to the profession of arms, who lived the hard life of the army or navy in that rude day, who cared but little for the finer arts and graces of life; yet the impressiveness of the moment, the fancy of it, the pregnant future, the mystery of to-morrow, their desperate hazard, caught hold of them in some strange way. With

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bated breath they listened to the voice of the young general, which sounded prophetic even to them, as he quoted:

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

As the words fell from his lips he stopped, as if startled by their significance.

“Gentlemen,” he said at last, “I would rather have written that poem than take Quebec.”

He was silent again for a little space after this surprising declaration. No one broke the reverie in which the general seemed plunged after that, and before he spoke again a voice called out from the black mass of the shore:

“*Qui vive!*”

It was the old cry of the soldiers of France; the bold demand with which, as of yore, they met their ancient foes, rang sharply over the waters through the night.

“*France!*” promptly replied the Jacobite in the bow, with ready presence of mind.

“*À quel régiment!*” called the hidden sentry.

“*De la Reine!*” was the reply in excellent French.

It was the name of one of the regiments known to be with Bougainville. So far the conversation had been easy, but if the Frenchman asked more, if he demanded the password—what then? The men in the boat held their breath as they drifted on, but

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the unseen watcher was satisfied, apparently, for he said nothing more.

“This augurs well for our success,” whispered Wolfe to Grafton after the last boat had passed the danger point. “He evidently thinks we are——”

He was interrupted again. They were nearer the shore now. There were fewer trees too. A challenge rang out over the water once more. They could see this sentry running toward the bank of the river. This one was wiser than the other; he demanded to know what boats those were.

“Provision boats for Quebec,” answered the Scotsman readily. “Be quiet! Don’t make a noise or the English will hear us!”

As it happened there was an English sloop out in the river, and the man, waving his hand, said no more. They were safe again. But the suspense was terrible. Fortunately it was soon relieved. Presently the boats swept around a huge headland jutting out into the stream. Below the headland lay a little cove. The current shot swiftly about the promontory and swept around the little bay. The boats were carried below the landing-place and it took some hard pulling before their stems touched the shore.

Wolfe had gone forward in the cutter, and the others drawing back to give him passage, he was the first man to set foot upon the muddy shore. It was four o’clock now. They could hear eight bells chiming faintly from a ship in the river. Dawn was beginning across the hills. Around them in the shadow it was as still as death—that most silent

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hour before the day breaks. A gentle breeze had sprung up and was sighing softly through the trees at the top of the cliff; the sky was overcast; they would have rain presently.

About two hundred feet away, since it was low tide, the bluffs rose precipitously from the level beach. There was room at their base to disembark the whole army. After Wolfe and the officers, including Grafton, had landed, the light infantry noiselessly clambered out of the boats and advanced toward the foot of the cliffs.

It was as dark as midnight under their shadow, but at the top the first grayness of the coming morning was dimly perceptible. Trees were silhouetted against the sky, and the tents, white blurs, could be seen from the river. The enemy was there, then. Was he ready? They would soon know.

A zigzag path, up which a single file of men might with difficulty make its way, broke the sheer face of the cliff. It had been barricaded with heavy timbers and was at present unscalable.

There was a momentary pause.

It seemed as if the whole enterprise, so brilliantly conceived and so successfully carried out hitherto, would be blocked by this unfortunate obstacle. They had succeeded in landing unobserved, but if they attempted to tear down the barricade they would inevitably attract the attention of the negligent defenders at the top of the path. Under such circumstances the attempt would have to be given over. As Wolfe had said, one hundred men might hold that towering cliff against an army.

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“ I think we can scramble up the cliff by the aid of these trees,” said Howe at last.

It was a bold proposition. Wolfe looked at him gratefully and approvingly. It was their only chance, and the young general gave the signal for the attempt in these not very encouraging words:

“ You may try it, Colonel Howe, but I do not think you will succeed. Captain,” he added, turning to one of his staff, “ tell General Monckton to keep the rest of the men quiet in the boats for a few moments. We may have no need for them.”

As he spoke Howe and his gallant twenty-four sprang at the cliff. They were soon lost in the shadow covering the face of it, and the watchers below could trace the course of their slow and painful ascent by the crashing sounds they made, as by the aid of stunted trees growing in clumps here and there they made their toilsome way upward. Why the French did not discover them has never been explained.

The whole future history of the world depended upon the success of the endeavour of that gallant little handful of men, and though they may not have realized it as we do now, something of the importance of the attempt made itself felt even to them. Wolfe, leaning his enfeebled form against a tree, stood with his face turned upward at earnest gaze. Grafton, who stood nearest him, heard him whisper:

“ Pray God, they may make it! Pray God!”

Presently the sounds died away altogether. The silence was broken by the sound of a musket-shot, followed by another and another. A quick

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fusillade rang out from the sky above them. They were there, then! They were engaged! What had been the issue?

Concealment was no longer possible or desirable. At a word from their commander the men on shore sprang at the barricades. The scene changed from one of absolute quiet to intense activity.

“Have they won, think you?” asked Grafton.

“We shall know in a moment,” answered Wolfe. “If they have lost, somebody will come tumbling down the cliff to tell the tale. Meanwhile, I am staking all on the chance of their success.”

The little cove was now filled with noise. Catching the contagion the men began to spring from the boats and fell in on the shore. The feelings of the soldiers, repressed so long through the night, found vent in cheers and cries. Presently a hail came down from the cliff. It was Howe’s voice.

“We have the post!” he shouted. “The enemy has fled! The way is open!”

“Hold it at all hazards!” cried the commander.

The cheering men fairly tore the barricades to pieces and scrambled up the path, Wolfe himself in the lead. Captain de Vergor, who commanded the French guard, was incapable and a coward. He had kept negligent watch. Howe and his handful of men had surprised them. The fall of New France must be laid at the feet of one person; and, singularly enough, the beginning of American in-

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dependence may be traced to the splendid exploit of the young soldier, who, as a general long after, at Long Island, White Plains, Brandywine, and Germantown, did his best to stop its course.

The party who gained the top found themselves upon a grassy plateau whose level surface was broken by slight undulations. From this vantage-ground they could see far down the river. They seemed to be lifted in air on the roof of the world. Quebec lay before them, but hidden by the undulations of the plateau. Clumps of trees rose here and there, but the ground was mainly clear. It was plainly morning now. Wolfe's first words were those of hearty thanks and congratulation to the young colonel of the light infantry. Then he turned to his friend, who had followed him up the hill:

“Go back to the boats, Captain Grafton,” he cried, “and use all speed to bring the men under Burton over from the other side! Ah,” he exclaimed, sweeping the river with his glance, “yonder come the ships drifting down with the tide! Despatch Lieutenant Hatfield to Admiral Holmes with my compliments and ask him to have the rest of the men landed from the ships at once. I think it would be possible to get a few of the six-pounders up the path. Perhaps the admiral will send seamen to attend to it. We shall need them sadly, if I mistake not.”

“Think you we shall have a fight this morning?” asked Grafton.

“I am sure of it!”

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“I shall endeavour to be back in season to join in then,” answered the sailor, turning away.

“I think you will have ample time,” said Wolfe, smiling at the sentiments of his friend.

As Grafton descended the path Wolfe despatched Howe, with his light infantry, to attend to the important duty of silencing the adjacent French posts.

CHAPTER XI

ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

IT was ten o'clock in the morning. Every available English soldier had been landed on the Quebec side and had scrambled up the cliffs to the Plains of Abraham. The hours intervening since the first attack had not been idle ones. French batteries erected at Samos and Sillery, not far distant, and on either side of the cove, had been gallantly taken by assault, and scouting parties had cleared the adjacent country of stragglers. The sailors under Grafton by herculean endeavour had drawn two six-pounders to the crest of the plateau. Since eight o'clock in the morning these two guns, excellently served by the seamen, had been replying to a heavy fire from the three larger guns of the French, who had begun assembling as early as six o'clock on the hill beyond the English position.

From the covert afforded by the trees and underbrush on the side of the St. Charles River valley, as well as on the St. Lawrence edge, Indian and backwoods sharpshooters had been pouring a galling rifle fire upon the English, to which no effective reply could be made. The thin red line of soldiers

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that had so often stood between humanity's progress and the armed world in opposition, keeping open the pathway of the future, was drawn up in three ranks. The lines were not long enough to reach across the plateau, and the left flank, where Townshend commanded, was refused—drawn back at a right angle from the battle front.

Colonel Burton, with the light infantry, was held in reserve to anticipate a possible attack from Bougainville. That worthy officer, however, knew nothing of the landing and remained quietly in camp at Cap-Rouge, expecting the return of the British ships with the changing tide. The sky was overcast, and fitful showers, light in character and brief in duration, besprinkled the sod, soon to be wetted by a liquid substance of greater consistence and more ominous colour.

If the scarlet-clad Englishmen presented a vivid though menacing picture to the French, the aspect of the latter was sufficiently picturesque to awaken the admiration of their foes. Very handsome the white coats of the French regulars looked against the green grass that morning. Alas! many of them were destined to sport the red colours of England before the day was decided.

Monsieur de Montcalm and his officers, on horseback, rode to and fro addressing and arranging their lines in plain view. There was much cheering and shouting on the one hand, much grim, dour silence on the other. The essential racial differences between the two nations were well marked in the varying demeanour of the two

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armies. There was no lack of courage and spirit in either.

Of course there were no horses in the British army, and Wolfe and his staff, with all the other officers, were forced to go afoot. The young general did not look an heroic figure. Tall, thin, stooping, emaciated, red-headed, pale, freckled; a most unmilitary cast of countenance, with retreating forehead and weakly sloping chin; never were a physiognomy and appearance so belied by character. The sparkle of his red-brown eyes was the only thing that indicated the transcendent greatness of the man.

Few commanders have been so esteemed and loved by the men they led as he, and the affection and respect in which they held him were warranted, for his mettle had been proved. No mere freak of fortune, no lucky chance had put him in his present position. He had won preferment by desert. This morning was but the final demonstration of his courage and capacity, the culmination of a brief but rarely brilliant career.

Some of the men behind Wolfe had followed him through the surf that beat upon the rock-bound shores of Cape Breton off Louisburg, and they knew what he could do. There was, indeed, sore need for the manifestation of the highest skill, the exercise of the most dauntless courage. There was no disguising the serious nature of the situation before them. Opposed to them was a general who was the very flower of the French captains of his age. The battalions under his command had fairly

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beaten the English at far-off Oswego, at Fort William Henry, and with most awful slaughter at tree-clad Ticonderoga. Drawn from the most famous regiments of old France, they had worthily upheld their ancient traditions of valour on many a New-World field.

The two armies were about equal in number. The qualities of the French regulars were as high as those of the British army, but the average of the French force was sadly diminished by the fact that the larger portion of their army was made up of Canadian militia. These hardy peasants were excellent fighters in forest service, but poor material indeed with which to face regular troops in the open.

But Montcalm had been hasty. He might have waited longer, until Bougainville with his excellent division had joined him, or at least reached a position from which he could support the French attack by a demonstration in force in the rear of the English. Fight the French must, of course, or starve, but they would not have starved in a few hours, and a few hours might have materially changed the situation. There were battery after battery of field-pieces back in Quebec which should have been despatched to Montcalm's assistance. His repeated and most pressing requests to de Ramesay, the commander, had only brought three guns to him, and the cowardly de Vaudreuil, the Governor of the Province, was holding at Beauport thousands of men idle in their intrenchments, who should have been despatched to his assistance.

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How explain the Frenchman's reckless haste? The fact was that Montcalm had always beaten the English. He had never in his whole career met a single commander among them who appeared to have the slightest military genius, and he made the fatal mistake of despising his foes. Perhaps the fact that they lay there stubbornly taking the galling skirmish fire from the coverts on either flank so silently, in spite of its ghastly effectiveness, replying only to his heavier guns with their two six-pounders, gave him greater confidence; at any rate, at ten in the morning he ordered an advance.

With feverish impatience the English held themselves in restraint under the peremptory orders of their commander. As Wolfe saw the French rising on the crest of the hill, giving evidence of their intention to join battle in close encounter, he walked rapidly up and down his own line speaking those simple, hearty words of encouragement, as he passed by his soldiery, which do much to make a man a hero. A quiver of delight ran through the compact ranks. With fierce pleasure the men looked to their pieces and made themselves ready.

It was to be a direct attack in force, a test of marksmanship and endurance, no manœuvring, no bewildering tactics, just a fierce give and take and the best man to win—a game the English loved to play, and one they played well. Montcalm on his black horse on the brow of the hill raised his hand. It was coming, then. There was a stir in the French ranks. The pieces were raised to the

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shoulders. The general's hand fell. Ah, it was upon them!

Suddenly the crest of the slope in front of them was tipped with flame and covered with smoke. The rattle of arms crashed over the field. Bullets rang through the morning air. Men were dropping here and there among the ranks of the stolid British; some moaned and shrieked in the anguish of shattered limb or torn body, and some lay still and quiet in the grass, recking little, minding nothing of the roar of battle about them. The French, after the first volley, began firing continuously and irregularly, still advancing.

Suddenly, when the cheering and yelling white-coats had reached a point perhaps one hundred yards away, a sharp command rang out in English. The officers repeated Wolfe's signal.

“Steady! Ready! Aim!”

Be quiet all, for now was the time! The muskets of the waiting red ranks came smartly down.

“Fire!”

The first rank delivered a volley which crashed over the plateau like cannon-shot. Their drill was magnificent. A moment of startling silence supervened and the second rank repeated the performance. Ere the echoes of the discharge had died away among the hills, the third rank sent its sheet of destruction in the face of the advancing men. The field was covered with thick smoke. The English could see nothing. For a moment no reply was made to them. Then a scattered fire, confessing weakness by its feebleness, ran along

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the French line. Again and again the deadly discharge of the English was poured out. The French seemed to be making no reply at all. Presently there was a slight respite and the smoke cleared away, revealing a horrid picture of carnage.

The crest of the hill was covered with bodies. Most of the horsemen were down. Montcalm and one or two officers were striving desperately to reform their men. The Canadian militia, unable to stand against such a fearful fire, had melted away. The French grenadiers, the white-coated regulars, were rallying in bewildered little knots here and there upon their officers. The French advance was completely barred. Now was the moment to strike.

“The picture?” said Wolfe to Grafton, who was standing by him. “You have it?”

“Here.”

“Remember—and good-bye, old friend. Now, gentlemen,” he cried, “let us go at them. Forward!”

Like a common soldier the young general, sword up, face smiling, put himself at the head of the Louisburg grenadiers. The French had at last got into some sort of order, rallying in thin, broken, and exhausted lines. Their courage was superb. They saw death in the advancing mass of the British infantry, but they did not waver. The battle was lost to them; they would strike another blow at any rate.

It was the English who cheered now, the

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French had passed the cheering stage. This time it was they who poured their volleys into the advancing British. The execution done among them was fearful. A bullet shattered the wrist of the general. He caught a handkerchief about it and pressed on. A second shot hit him, but still he did not falter. A third bullet struck him full in the breast; he staggered a moment and fell. With a fierce yell for revenge his army swept by him. A last volley from the French and bayonets crossed in the smoke.

Wolfe, in the rear of the line, was down and dying. It needed no surgeon to translate the look of death upon his face. Grafton knelt by him and took his hand, tears streaming down his face. The path of glory was indeed ending here. Others quickly assembled where the soldier lay bleeding to death on the field.

“The battle,” whispered the dying man. “Tell me?”

“They run! They run!” cried Grafton, rising and surveying the field.

“Who run?” he asked, eagerly opening his eyes and looking up at his friend from where he lay in the arms of the surgeon on the grass, stained red by his own blood.

“The enemy! The enemy! They give way everywhere!”

“Go, one of you, to Colonel Burton,” said Wolfe, smiling weakly, “and tell him to march Webb’s regiment down to the St. Charles River to cut off their retreat from the bridge.”

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It was the last thought of a soldier—his duty. He sank back in the arms of his attendants.

Philip, filled with grief, dropped on his knees beside him. Wolfe opened his eyes again for a moment.

“Philip,” he whispered, “remember the picture—Quebec—” He turned on his side. “Now, God be praised,” he murmured, “I will die in peace.”

There was a fierce struggle going on all over the field. The French were dying hard. Grafton ran along the line to inform Monckton, the second in command, of Wolfe’s death. He found that brigadier desperately wounded, and then ran over to the left flank to carry the news to Townshend, the second brigadier.

Aided by heavy skirmishers in the wood, and by the fact that Townshend was compelled to refuse his lines, the battle had been more fiercely contested here than elsewhere. A squadron of cavalry, the only party of horse on the field, which had been sent scouting by Bougainville, suddenly appeared on the flank, and charged furiously down upon Townshend’s men. They gave way. That general had started for the centre of the army when Grafton told him the sad tidings, and at his request the sailor hurried to the extreme left flank.

Without thinking that he was left unsupported by the temporary retreat of the English soldiers, Grafton sprang forward to meet the cavalry. He brought down the first horseman with his pistol, but the second struck his cutlass from his outstretched

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hand, inflicting a deep cut in his arm, and the third caught him by the collar.

"I'll take this one prisoner. Yield, monsieur!" he cried in French.

"We are beaten!" cried the officer commanding the cavalry, as the English rallied and came forward again. "Look, we give way everywhere! *Sauve que peut, mes braves!*"

"I don't lose this man, though," said the soldier stubbornly. "Will you run, or be dragged?" he called to Grafton. Not waiting for a reply, he wheeled his horse, and, keeping tight hold of Grafton, galloped off with the rest.

It was not a dignified position, but there was nothing for him to do but to strive to keep his feet as best he might. If he fell he would be trampled to death by the horses; if he did not run he would probably be dragged until he choked. He was a wise as well as a brave man, so he struggled desperately on.

His arm had been badly wounded by the blow which had disabled it, and as his captor reached the St. Louis Gate of the city a bullet struck him in the back. His strength finally gave way at that, and he fainted. He was a small man, and the big trooper lifted him to the front of the saddle by some unexplained impulse, laid him across the horse, and held him there as he forced his way into the panting, terrified mass of retreating soldiery.

Ahead of them was an officer on a big black horse. He was deadly pale, and blood was trickling over the white lace of his shirt and staining his open

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waistcoat. He would have fallen from his horse had not two soldiers on either side supported him. He sat with his hands on the pommel of the saddle, leaning forward. His face wore a stricken look. Tears were trickling down his cheeks—not on account of his wounds, however, but from a deeper hurt. It was Montcalm.

The gate was open now, and the fugitives were pouring through. Inside the walls a crowd of women, children, and old men were congregated in the Rue St. Louis. There was weeping and wailing and wringing of hands as the wounded, battered, shattered, terrified mass of fugitives swept through the gate. The deadly rattle of small-arms, which since early morning had kept up without the walls, had nearly died away. The bugles of England were calling a halt, the red-coats were assembling on their colours. They were too weak to assault the ramparts yet, and therefore allowed the shattered French army to enter the city. Presently the marquis, still on his horse, was drawn within the gate by the eddying crowd.

“Oh, mon Dieu! mon Dieu! Le Marquis est tué!” cried a woman.

Her words were taken up by the crowd, who loved the great and gentle soldier with a passionate devotion which they withheld from the thieving scoundrels who made up the civil government. Even then his first thought was for the people. As he heard the cries of the multitude he lifted his head and said:

“Ce n'est rien, ce n'est rien; ne vous affligez pas

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pour moi, mes bonnes amies." (It is nothing, it is nothing; do not be troubled for me, my good friends.)

Meanwhile the dragoon, with Grafton lying limp across his saddle, rode a few rods down the street until he escaped from the thick of the crowd. Then he turned his attention to his prisoner. The Englishman was lying pale and apparently lifeless before him.

"*Nom de chien!*" cried the Frenchman. "Have I been carrying a dead man all this time?"

With an expression of disgust he lifted him from his saddle and let him slide to the ground. He was riding near the pavement at the time and the street was narrow. The soldier had not thrown him roughly, and Philip slipped gently down upon the sidewalk, his head falling rather heavily against the open doorstep. A woman standing gazing from the door screamed and shrank back. The shock and the pain of his wounds caused him to open his eyes. He was dimly conscious of a face as beautiful as an angel's bending over him. He heard a sweet, startled voice, filled with music, murmuring in exquisite French,

"*Mon Dieu! He is living, then!*"

He knew no more.

BOOK III
THE HONOUR OF DE VITRÉ

CHAPTER XII

THE SAILOR AND THE MOB

LIEUTENANT DENIS DE VITRÉ had been in peril of his life many times during his short but exciting career, but he had never come so near death as within the past few months. Indeed, His Grim Majesty, the King of Terrors, had stared the young officer full in the face and his cold hand had been fairly clasped around his throat. It would have gone hard with him but for the timely interference of a friend.

De Vitré was a hardy, bold young man, who loved fighting as he loved sunlight, on account, perhaps, of the Irish touch in his nature from a far-off strain of the Emerald Isle on the distaff side. One of the higher Canadian noblesse, whose family was of first importance in New France, owning wide possessions and high in favour in the governor's court, he had received a commission in the navy of France. While in command of the boats of a scouting expedition in the lower St. Lawrence he had been captured by Admiral Durell's squadron.

When the fleet of Vice-Admiral Saunders entered the river and started upon that toilsome and

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dangerous ascent to Quebec the vice-admiral had required his captives, of whom de Vitré was chief, to pilot the great ships up the uncertain river. The young officer, for one, had peremptorily refused to do this, and neither threat nor appeal had induced him to recede from his position.

The process of intimidation had indeed been carried so far as to cause Monsieur de Vitré to be mounted upon the rail of a ship with a rope around his neck, the other end of which was rove through a block at the top-sail yard-arm. Had it not been for the friend mentioned he would have been hanged for his contumacy, and to discourage—or encourage—the other pilots, men of less rank and station, who showed a disposition to emulate his refusal.

From this difficult—and, for a man of birth and station, unpleasant—position the Frenchman had been rescued by the intercessions of the young captain of the ship, a brave man, who loved courage and resolution even in his enemies. As his intercession was seconded by the influence of General Wolfe, to whose request Admiral Saunders graciously deferred, it was efficacious in releasing Monsieur de Vitré from his appalling and unpleasant predicament.

Other men were found with less exalted views of their duty to their country who could be persuaded by the means which failed so signally in the case of de Vitré, and the ships were accordingly piloted safely up the river. Meanwhile, his quality having been demonstrated by his heroism, de Vitré was held a close prisoner in the fleet. He had re-

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fused to give his parole, and accordingly had been closely confined, and was carefully guarded.

A winning tongue, a little money, and specious promises of ultimate reward had made a friend for him among his guards, and the suborned soldier had at last found means to supply him with a British uniform. In the hurry and confusion of the debarkation of the soldiery for the attempt on the Plains of Abraham, de Vitré had succeeded in joining himself to one of the landing parties without attracting attention. The captain of the Sutherland, on which he had been held prisoner, was surprised the next morning to find the sentry bound and gagged—by his own collusion, of course, though that was unknown—in de Vitré's room and his prisoner gone.

However, there was so much business of moment on hand the day of the battle that no search was made for him; indeed, none could be made, and the certain fall of Quebec, which everybody realized must take place when the news of the victory was brought to the fleet, rendered his pursuit useless. It was too late for even a man of his courage to effect anything of importance then. His knowledge of British affairs would be of no service now.

In the natural course of events, too, de Vitré would fall into the hands of the English again in a few days. Meanwhile, as he was a pleasant fellow, agreeable and debonair, his captors were rather glad that he had the privilege of a few hours of liberty, especially as it was known that the inspiration

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of his escape was the most beautiful woman in New France.

De Vitré had met with no opportunity of escaping from the English lines until the battle was joined. He had been compelled by the exigencies of the situation to point his gun at his own countrymen, and though he took care it was not loaded with ball, the mere motion gave him exquisite anguish. In the smoke and confusion of the battlefield, however, he at last found occasion to mingle with the retreating French.

In the panic terror of their retreat no one in the crowding, pushing mob paid any attention to him; and he gained the city with the rest of the fugitives through the St. Louis Gate. Forcing his way through the multitude he ran rapidly down the street toward the place where dwelt the object of his adoration. He found her in the doorway of her house, bending over the prostrate form of a small man in the blue and white uniform of the British navy.

“Mademoiselle de Rohan!” he cried in great surprise, stopping short at the sight. “What is the meaning of this?”

The young woman looked up as he called her name, rose to her feet as she recognised him, and with an expression of the most withering scorn and contempt deliberately turned her back upon him. For the moment the stranger was forgotten. De Vitré gasped and turned pale with astonishment.

“Mademoiselle de Rohan!” he cried again, “do you not know me?”

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“ I know no one,” she answered, half-turning toward him with the contempt deepening upon her beautiful features, “ who, born in France, wears that uniform, which even you disgrace! ”

“ Disgrace, mademoiselle! ” he cried, straightening himself up, his face flushing. “ What mean you? Oh, this—why—I——”

“ By God! ” exclaimed a coarse, rough voice at his side, “ it’s de Vitré! ”

The young Frenchman faced about and saw himself confronted by a grenadier of the regiment La Sarre, who had stopped and was looking menacingly at him. He was followed by two or three regular soldiers from the various regiments and a sailor from Vauquelin’s squadron.

“ De Vitré, the traitor! ” cried another.

“ He who piloted the English ships up the river! ” exclaimed the sailor.

“ The man who betrayed New France! ” shouted a third.

The fleeing soldiery stopped and with several citizens gathered about the little group in the doorway.

“ Well, we are beaten now,” remarked the soldier who had first spoken, who held the rank of a sergeant, “ but I guess we can hold the town long enough to hang you, monsieur. I saw you in the English ranks when they charged upon us—curse them! And you brought up the ships——”

“ It’s a lie, a dastardly lie! ” cried de Vitré desperately. “ I——”

“ What are you doing with that English uniform

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on?" asked another, amid murmurs of indignation from the crowd, for the street was now blocked with people.

De Vitré, seeing the hopelessness of his situation, backed up against the wall and instinctively felt for his sword. Unfortunately for him he was wearing a private soldier's uniform, and he had thrown away his gun in that mad rush for the St. Louis Gate. He was alone, unarmed and helpless before the mob.

"It's a fearful mistake!" he shouted. "My friends, I am innocent! I can explain! Hear me!"

His voice was drowned in yells and execrations. The soldiers and people had been so harried and wrought upon by the defeat of the morning that a sinister desire for revenge on some one was added to the fickle yet malevolent passions so easily awakened in the Gallic mob. They wanted a scapegoat, and here was one to hand.

"Mademoiselle," cried the unhappy Frenchman, drawing himself up and turning to the girl, who stood spellbound before the appalling display of the fury and passion of the people, "I swear to you upon my honour that I am innocent! *Vive la nouvelle France!* Say that you believe me before I am taken! On my soul I believe this rabble intends to kill me!"

Anne de Rohan hesitated. Honesty rang in the young man's voice, honour looked out of his eyes—and love too—yet things were suspicious.

"Well, will you come with us peaceably, or——" interrupted the sergeant, with a grim and menacing gesture.

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“One moment, my friend,” cried the young man lightly, having recovered his coolness and having discovered the folly of expostulation.

He looked appealingly at the young woman.

“I believe you,” said Anne de Rohan, suddenly extending her hand to him. “Messieurs,” she cried, turning to the crowd, “Monsieur de Vitré gives me his word of honour that——”

“Oh, bah!” exclaimed the sergeant, “the honour of a traitor to the woman he loves!”

“Let us kill him where he stands!” shouted one.

“To the lantern with him!” roared another.

“No, my brave friends,” said the sergeant coolly, “order, if you please. He goes to the governor. Come, monsieur. Fall back, gentlemen, and give way. *À moi, mes camarades.*”

“Mademoiselle,” said de Vitré hurriedly, as the soldiers surrounded him and prepared to force a way through the crowd, “I can now face anything with a light heart. You believe in me. Take care of that gentleman yonder, he is a friend of mine.”

As he spoke, the soldiers seized him by the arm and hustled him down the street toward the Château St. Louis, the residence of the governor, where de Ramesay sat in hurried consultation with his officers over the defence of the stricken town. The crowd, after a few curious glances, followed the soldiers and left the prostrate Englishman alone on the doorstep.

The young woman turned again to the man on the step. He was wounded, perhaps dying. The

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bullet which struck him in the back had passed completely through his shoulder, and his shirt was stained with blood. There was a deep cut through the sleeve of his coat also, and his arm lay in a little pool of the same deadly fluid. His face was covered with blood from a slight wound on his forehead, and earth-stained as well from the muddy unpaved street where he had fallen. He was a hideous spectacle. Yet, though a foeman, he was wounded and helpless.

She knelt beside him, and, seeing at a glance that the wound in his face was superficial, with not unskilful fingers she rapidly opened his waistcoat and tore open his shirt. Yes, there was the dangerous wound. Blood was still oozing from it. She had assisted the good Sisters in nursing the sick and wounded during the siege, and the gruesome sight was not unfamiliar to her. The wound must be attended to at once. Raising her voice, she called through the little hallway:

“Josette! Jean-Rénaud, hither!”

Immediately a buxom young woman made her appearance at the door in obedience to her mistress's call.

“Water, quick, Josette, and get Jean-Rénaud! Here is a gentleman wounded, a friend of Monsieur de Vitré.”

“Jean-Rénaud is not in the house, mademoiselle. He went to the St. Louis Gate to——”

“I am here,” exclaimed a deep, rough voice, as a burly old man wearing the livery of the de Rohans came around the corner. “We have lost the battle.

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Monsieur de Montcalm is mortally wounded, as is Monsieur de Senezergues, and Monsieur de St. Ours is killed."

"Peace, Jean-Rénaud! I will hear your news in a moment. Meanwhile carry this gentleman to my chamber."

"But, mademoiselle, that uniform—he is an Englishman! An enemy!"

"In the face of death, Jean-Rénaud, all men are our friends; besides, Monsieur de Vitré——"

"Is he here?" queried the old servitor, "that traitor!"

"He is no traitor!" answered the girl boldly.

"Who says so?"

"He himself. His word of honour——"

"The honour of a——"

"How long am I to stand here and bandy words with you, Jean-Rénaud? Are you my servant, or no? Would you so answer Monsieur le Marquis? No? Then do as I bid you!"

She rose and looked at him with all the imperiousness of her thousand years of ancestry in the wild wastes of Brittany in her glance. When his mistress spoke like that there was nothing to be done but obey. The old marquis himself could not be more peremptory.

Jean-Rénaud stooped down and lifted up the slight form of the stranger, who lay in his arms as if he had been a boy. He carried him upstairs and deposited him upon a great bed in a low-ceiled chamber lighted by a dormer window. While his mistress, with the assistance of Josette, busied her-

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self below in preparing such homely medicaments as their experience could devise, Jean-Rénaud removed the clothes from Grafton and put him regularly in bed. Then he examined his wounds with the skill of an old campaigner.

Presently mademoiselle, followed by the maid, entered the room. With her own hands she assisted in washing the wounds and putting on some temporary bandages. As she did so she did not fail to note around the neck of the young Englishman a little chain of gold from which was suspended a leather case, evidently containing a locket.

"Shall I take this off also?" asked Jean-Rénaud, lifting the chain, as they passed the bandages.

"No, leave it there. 'Tis probably the picture of one he loves. Will he live, think you, Jean-Rénaud?"

"I know not, mademoiselle. 'Tis a rough wound, and he has lost much blood."

"A pity. But let us hope," murmured the girl thoughtfully.

The place where the bed stood was far from the window and in a subdued light, so she had not yet had a fair view of the face of the wounded man. Indeed, they had been so busy that they did not have time to wash his face, hence she had not recognised him.

"It were best to go for the surgeon, mademoiselle," remarked Josette, gazing at the Englishman with sympathetic interest, as Jean-Rénaud tied the last bandage about the cut in the arm.

"A good suggestion. Go you, Jean-Rénaud;

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and Josette, lock the street-door and see that things are looked after downstairs. 'Tis like to be a day of trouble. The soldiers are filling the street, and we had a sample of their temper but a moment since. Beg Dr. Arnoux to come quickly, Jean-Rénaud, and hasten yourself, for when you return you must accompany me to the governor in behalf of Monsieur de Vitré. Hand me that basin, Josette, and the cloth. I will wash this blood and earth from the face of the poor man."

CHAPTER XIII

GRAFTON COMES BACK TO THE ROSE

THE two servants, in obedience to her orders, left her alone with the wounded man. He had not recovered consciousness, and save for a few feeble moans, while they were working over his more serious wounds, he had given no evidence of life. She had not given any thought to cleansing his face until the bandaging and necessary work had been done. But now she sat down beside him, and dipping the cloth in the water tenderly wiped the earth stains from his cheek and the coagulated blood from the slight wound in his forehead.

As his features were thus disclosed to her in the dim light she suddenly stopped and bent over him in great surprise. Her heart almost stopped beating. Was it he? Could it be? She was not sure. It was so dark in the alcove behind the draperies of the bed, and the hangings were not drawn from before the window. Setting the basin down, she ran to the window and tore open the curtains.

The midday sunlight streamed into the chamber and lighted the corner where the bed stood. She turned and threw back the hangings with a nervous hand. The light fell full upon his face. With a low

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cry she recognised him. It was Grafton, Sir Philip, her knight of old! Oh, thank God for it! Come back to her after all these years—yet in this way, in such a plight!

She stood in silence after that first exclamation and gazed upon him, her heart, her soul in her eyes. At first she forgot the intervening years, she forgot the uniform he wore, she forgot he was an enemy; she remembered only that he had come back to her. His memory had been in her heart since those childish days. She had thought of him, dreamed of him, longed for him, ay! if the truth were admitted—she had loved him. Love! But could she love the enemy of France! Could a de Rohan mate with one of the hated English! She must put him out of her heart. Could she——

Merciful heavens, what idle thoughts were these! He was dying before her eyes. She leaned over him and called him, softly, tenderly, passionately. He did not stir, and he had told her in olden times that she might summon him from his grave and he would come at the sound of her voice. She spoke to him again and again, but he did not heed.

There was a prie-dieu near the head of the bed. She turned and sank to her knees before it, praying earnestly for him with such fervour and intensity as did not usually find place in her maidenly petitions. Then she came back to the bedside and stood looking at him, despair in her heart lest he should die, slip away, and make no sign. But there was nothing she could do, so she schooled herself to wait, and while she waited she studied him.

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How changed he was! Older, and yet the same. There were lines in his brow which were not there when she had known him before. She had seen him with a child's eyes—it was a woman now who looked upon him. Grafton was a very handsome man, not with the beauty of effeminacy, but in a bold, manly, striking way, so she had always thought, and she thought it the more strongly now. She marked how his blond hair curled gracefully about his brow, and through his half-opened lids she saw again the well-remembered eyes of gray. How full of light and sunshine they had been! Her gaze comprehended his features so strongly moulded and the world of decision in the firm mouth and the well-turned chin. She remembered it so well. His face, of course, was deadly pale at this moment, but when it was flushed with health and energy and the eyes were alight with light and hope, as she recalled him, he was a man to win any woman's heart. Would she ever see the hue of health and strength there again?

He was a small man, much under the middle stature. As she looked at him she felt sure that side by side, now that she had grown, he would scarcely overtower her by an inch, but there was nothing weak or insignificant about his figure. She remembered how lightly he had lifted her in the air the first day they met, and how indignant she had been. Could he do it now? And would she care?

She recalled with a delicious thrill of long dormant passion how he had held her in his arms and carried her to her room that never-to-be-forgotten night in the tower when he had kissed her—the first

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and only time. The blood flamed in her face at that recollection. She had thought of it often before, but with him lying there on the bed it seemed different. Would that surgeon never come? She could see him faintly breathing yet. He was so strong, there was certainly a chance for him. She could see the muscles of his neck and shoulder, and she had marked the splendid development of his arm as she had bandaged it a moment since. Yes, there was hope—if only Dr. Arnoux would come.

His face, in spite of his pallor, was bronzed by the wind and weather, yet the white line about his forehead where it was habitually covered with his hat showed what his original complexion had been. He still was a sailor, evidently. She came from a race of sailors, and her heart warmed toward those who go down to the sea in ships—for her father's sake, or was it for——

Suddenly her thoughts took another turn. The shirt in which Jean-Rénaud had dressed Grafton was left slightly open at the neck on account of the bandage. The chain and the locket had been pushed aside and the locket lay on the pillow by the side of his face nearest her. Whose face was in the locket? her heart queried anxiously. Men did not usually wear lockets unless they loved. Ah! She snatched it up eagerly. In any event, she would not have been a woman if she had not earnestly desired to look in it, but now—the possibilities consumed her.

“I wonder who it may be?” she murmured to herself. “’Tis a pretty case.” She peered impa-

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tiently, anxiously, jealously at it, turning it over and over in her hand. It fascinated her; she would have given worlds to look, and yet she could not bring herself to open it.

“ Well, 'tis none of my affair, at any rate,” she said at last, dropping it upon the pillow, but with great reluctance, “ 'tis nothing to me, and he is nothing. He can never be anything but a memory of my childhood. Pity,” she went on, relentlessly striving to deceive her heart by simulating an indifference foreign to her feelings, “ that so gallant a man should be laid low by such a mischance. Jean-Rénaud says the shot struck him in the back—in the back—I wonder—but no, I know he is brave, and, besides, he is a friend of de Vitré's, and de Vitré is no coward, nor would he choose his friends from such.” She broke away again in thought. “ O God, how quiet he lies! Will he ever awaken from that deadly stupor, I wonder? I would the doctor were here! Poor Sir Philip, I—I—I don't want you to die!”

She laid her hand softly on his brow and he quivered under her touch. To her at that moment, she told herself, he was only the friend of her girlhood, her knight of the old tower, a comrade, wounded, helpless, dependent, suffering. It was a lie, she knew—and the Rohans never lied. What was the use of deceiving her; no matter what was in the locket, no matter whether he had forgotten her or no, whether he were false or true, she loved him!

“ I love you! I love you!” she murmured.

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It was the truth at last. The gates were open and the floods were out. She took his head in her hands and bent low over him. Why keep up the deception any longer? And in any case he would not see or hear, he would never know.

“I love you! I love you! I love you!” she said again and again.

He was dying, perhaps. Well, better so. He could never be anything to her; those two had nothing in common but the memory of a past, and perhaps he had not even that—that locket—but at least she could love him—dead or alive—forever. She bent nearer to him. Her hair—how he had praised it!—brushed his cheek; her eyes—how he had admired them!—gazed into his own, half-shut and dull.

She drew still nearer. With a growing courage she kissed him. She laid her lips softly upon his forehead, then shrank back affrighted at what she had done. A burning flush suffused her cheek again. Aghast she withdrew a little from him and forced herself to sit down. So she watched him with eyes brimming, bosom heaving, heart beating, and with words of prayer and caress mingling in her soul.

Presently he stirred slightly and opened his eyes, at first slowly, and then wider while he stared about him in bewilderment. As she saw this evidence of returning life her heart bounded with hope, but she shrank back farther in the shadow. He must not see her. He must not know. He could not—she

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was so changed, and he would never find out that they had met. He could go back to the lady of the locket.

In a little while he lifted his unwounded arm and felt eagerly for the little case hanging from the chain about his neck. His expression of anxiety gave place to one of relief as he found it. Ah, she was right, then! How she hated that pictured woman, whoever she might be! He had forgotten her. He should never know. She steeled her heart against him, closed her lips, turned away her head, and made no sound.

As his eyes roamed about the room with an expression of vague wonder in them, he did not at first see her. When he did he recalled her face, but only as it had bent over him in that momentary return to consciousness on the doorstep, was it moments, or hours, or weeks, ago? He stared at her in silence for a moment and then strove to rise. He fell back, however, with the pain from the effort. A groan burst from his lips.

"You are not to rise," she said quickly, stepping over to the bed and laying her hand upon him—how her heart responded to this living touch—"you are to lie perfectly quiet."

She strove vainly to compose her voice in spite of her agitation. She clinched her hand resolutely, determined not to betray herself. She kept her head slightly turned away. If he looked at her as of old, if he pleaded with her, she felt that she could not withstand him.

"Yes," she added, in response to the look of in-

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quity in his face, "you are in Quebec. A soldier brought you. You fell at my door."

"The battle?" he whispered.

"Fortune was with you this time, monsieur," she answered sadly, "and my countrymen were defeated."

"Thank you, mademoiselle," replied Grafton, "but I must go."

"But you are a prisoner. We still hold the city."

"But the trouble to you," murmured Grafton, "this trespass on your hospitality——"

"You are a friend of Monsieur de Vitré."

"De Vitré!" he exclaimed. "Do you know him?"

"Yes, he is a prisoner in the Château St. Louis now."

"A prisoner?" he asked in weak astonishment. "Why, I left him——"

"But you must not talk any more," she said again. "Ah, here is the doctor!" she cried, as she heard steps on the stairs, and the old surgeon, followed by Jean-Rénaud and Josette, entered the room. The two servants recognised Grafton at once, but Anne laid a warning finger on her lips and they kept silence.

"What — what — mademoiselle! Have you turned your house into a hospital?" cried the doctor. "Where is the patient?"

He bustled over to the side of the bed and looked keenly at the young man before him.

"Where is the wound, Sir Englishman? Ah,

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in the shoulder!" His deft hands were busy with the bandages meanwhile. "And monsieur has been shot in the back——"

"I was not running away, sir, I would have you know!" protested Grafton, with unusual vigour.

"Why, no, of course not!" said the doctor soothingly.

"I was captured by your cavalry, monsieur, and probably shot by a stray bullet from our own line."

"Quite so, and the bullet has made a nice hole clean through your shoulder. If you lie quiet for a few days, a week or so, I think all will be well with you. Now the cut in the arm. Ah, 'tis not serious either!"

The doctor skilfully rebandaged the wounds after applying a healing dressing, and then complimented mademoiselle for the skill with which she had tied the original bandages. Leaving some medicine to keep down any inflammation or fever, and giving some directions as to the diet of the invalid—directions which were wonderfully simplified by a great scarcity of food, for the town was practically in a state of starvation—the doctor prepared to leave.

"No, no, mademoiselle," he said, as she pressed him to remain, "I have no time. The city is full of wounded and dying. Every one is pressed into service. Monsieur de Montcalm is shot through the breast. He can scarcely survive the day. When I told him, in answer to his inquiry, that he could not live, he exclaimed, 'So much the better, my dear Arnoux, I shall not live to see the

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surrender of Quebec!' *Hélas*, so brave a soldier, and so young! He will never go back to Candiac, to the wife and children in his beloved France!"

"My general," whispered Grafton, "he, too, is killed."

"He was a brave man," returned the surgeon courteously. "Well, monsieur, we may trust they are together there"—he threw up his head—"where the brave are friends and war and wounds are banished."

"Can I not be taken away, monsieur?"

"No, no! On no account! You must lie quite still!—I will look in on him to-morrow, mademoiselle," said the doctor, turning to leave the room. "Adieu."

"Are you dissatisfied with your quarters, monsieur?—but you have not told me your name," asked Anne.

"I am Philip Grafton, captain in his Britannic Majesty's navy; and you are——"

"I am—Alixé de Couëdic, monsieur, at your service."

She gave him a secondary title in her family, and one of her many baptismal names which he had never heard.

"Ah, you remind me!—but no—Mademoiselle de Couëdic? Yet, 'tis a Breton name. Know you the family of de Rohan, mademoiselle?"

"They come from Brest and Finisterre, monsieur. We are from Morbihan."

There was a little silence in the room, and both were thinking of the old château and that halcyon

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night. He looked again at her. Strange! Yet it could not be! De Couëdic? He did not know the name, and yet——

“You were speaking of Monsieur de Vitré a moment since, mademoiselle,” finally said Grafton.

She noticed his voice was visibly stronger under the doctor’s strengthening cordial, and that he looked better already.

“Yes, Monsieur Grafton, he was at my door when you fell, dressed in the uniform of your country. He was recognised. ’Tis said that he piloted the English ships up the river, betraying his country. The mob wanted to hang him.”

“Good heavens!” cried Grafton. “’Tis not possible! Here is a deadly mistake! Where did you say he was taken?”

“To the Château St. Louis, monsieur.”

“I must go to him at once, mademoiselle!” he cried and in spite of the pain he tried to rise. “He is innocent! He refused to pilot the ships! They had a rope about his neck because he would not betray his country!”

“Can this be true, monsieur?”

“True!” he replied. “I was there—I saw it all!”

“But that English uniform?”

“He evidently tried to escape in it, and succeeded. He is innocent of everything he has been charged with, and, so far from being a traitor, he is a hero! He was in love with some one in Quebec. He must have broken away from the ship to come to—— Ah, he was at your door! You are the lady, then!

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What a pity! No, do not detain me! Retire, I beg of you, that I may rise and go to him! In the temper in which they now are they will hang him outright!"

"No," answered the girl, rising herself and gently forcing him back, "you must not go! You can not! As you say, I am the woman he loves, monsieur, and I will go!"

She forced herself to make the avowal. Every barrier she could imagine she would raise between herself and this young Englishman, now and of old the master of her heart. He loved some one else and he was an enemy. She hated herself for loving him, but that she could not help. At least she could conceal it and separate herself from him.

"Tell them, on the honour of an English sailor, that he is innocent! Let the governor come or send an officer to me. I will convince him! Make haste, mademoiselle!" he replied.

"I fly, monsieur."

"One moment!" he cried impetuously, catching her dress as she turned away. He must know. This woman's looks tortured him; why, he knew not. "Tell me, Mademoiselle de Couëdic, do you love him as well?"

"Monsieur forgets himself!" she cried imperiously, yet her heart stood still. Was he about to recognise her? Was it joy, or fear, that filled her soul? She continued hurriedly, her voice softening in spite of herself: "Release my dress, sir! But there, I forgive you. You are wounded, ill. I

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thank you for saving my friend. Au revoir. I go to save him, also.”

She left him a prey to a strange, jealous agony. Who was she? Why did she bring to mind the figure of the little girl in the white robe, the little girl with the great eyes, in the dark tower?

CHAPTER XIV

FIGHT, RETREAT, OR SURRENDER

THE Chevalier de Ramesay, the Governor of Quebec, sat alone in his cabinet in the Château St. Louis, gazing out across the St. Charles River at the exquisite panorama spread before him. The sky had cleared and the sun was shining brilliantly. Such a picture was opened before his vision as may scarcely be seen elsewhere in the world.

Beyond the gilded cross of the Jesuit seminary, which bisected the heavens, the horizon was softly blue with the swelling curves of the distant Laurentian mountains. The bold headland of Cap-Tourmente, rising from the water's edge, marked the end of the range on the river side. Below him spread the ancient lower town, now wrecked and ruined from the constant bombardment of the English. Off to the left across the smooth surface of the St. Charles River rose the gentle hills of the Beauport shore, covered with farms, with their stone houses embowered in trees, with here and there a manor. The yellow grain in the fields was ready for the harvesters.

The river bank was lined with the tents, many of them already deserted, of the guarding army. The

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foreground to the right was broken by the beautifully wooded slopes of the Isle of Orleans, and far off on the other shore of the mighty St. Lawrence rose the bold promontory of Point Lévis. In the basin beneath him, extending from the Isle of Orleans to the point, the huge leviathans of England, the great ships of the line, with their bristling rows of cannon, swung at their anchors to the tide. At any moment they might recommence that horrible hail of fire and destruction, which for so many days had been poured upon the devoted town of which he was governor.

As he watched them idly, a puff of smoke rose from the battery on Point Lévis, and presently the faint roar of the discharge was followed by the crash of another shot in the almost deserted lower town. Some English gunners were trying their pieces now and then, but for the most part the batteries were silent that morning after the infernal uproar of the night. It was noon, and as there was nothing being done anywhere, apparently, the calm and peace were practically unbroken.

It was a scene to make a painter rave and a poet dream, but it had no interest then for de Ramesay. He sat at a large table, leaning his head upon one hand and with the other idly tapping a plan of the city spread before him. The room was empty, but there was enough perturbation in de Ramesay's mind to have filled a castle. Presently a young officer entered and saluted.

"What says the marquis?" asked the chevalier, looking up.

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“ He said, sir,” replied the young man hesitating, “ that you could do as you pleased. He would give no further orders. He added that he had business of greater moment—I quote his very words, Monsieur le Gouverneur, craving your pardon—‘ than this ruined garrison and this wretched country.’ ”

“ Mon Dieu! What a change in a few hours! Yesterday one almost imagined another week would see the siege raised, and to-day we are defeated, and to-morrow comes the end. How did the marquis seem, Captain Rouvigny? ”

“ In desperate case, sir. His affairs go badly.”

“ Like our own,” murmured the chevalier, as the captain continued:

“ Dr. Arnoux says he can not live beyond the morrow. Bishop Pontbriand was already with him.”

There was a little pause in the room. The chevalier still played absently with the map.

“ Poor man!” he said at last, “ perhaps, after all, ’tis better so. Death is the last refuge, and the best, for the beaten. Monsieur de Vaudreuil,” he continued interrogatively, “ what of him? ”

“ Well, general, while I waited on Monsieur de Montcalm, Captain Johnstone came to him from the governor also asking what should be done.”

“ What reply gave the marquis? ”

“ Four words, sir.”

“ And they were——”

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“Not much comfort there,” responded the chevalier, smiling ruefully, “we at least can not desert our post, whatever de Vaudreuil may do; and as for fighting, without his army we can not hold the place at all, especially with the English intrenched on the citadel side. Have they brought up any batteries yet?”

“An officer on the walls told me that they were landing guns from the ships, sir.”

“And our troops?”

“Dreadfully disorganized and disheartened, sir.”

“And the militia?”

“A mere mob,” answered the captain, shrugging his shoulders in disgust.

“What does de Vaudreuil intend to do, I wonder?” murmured the chevalier at last, turning once more to the window overlooking Beauport.

“Good heavens!” he cried, as his gaze fell on the distant camps at Beauport. “Look yonder! What make you of that, captain?”

“They are abandoning the intrenchments! ’Tis a retreat, sir!” cried the officer, after a quick scanning of the prospects before them.

“The cowards! We are to be left alone, then!” exclaimed the governor wrathfully.

“An officer from Monsieur de Vaudreuil,” said an orderly, at that moment entering the room.

“Admit him,” said de Ramesay. “Ah, Monsieur de Contrecœur!” he remarked, as a young man entered, bowed, and handed him a sealed paper. “Monsieur de Vaudreuil retreats, then?”

“Alas! yes, monsieur,” returned the officer.

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“Would to God that Monsieur de Lévis were here! What news or orders for me, sir?”

“’Tis in the letter, sir.”

The commandant broke open the packet.

“’Tis a narrower choice,” he said, smiling bitterly, as he threw the paper on the table after he had mastered the contents, “than that offered us by Monsieur de Montcalm. He eliminates retreat from his possibilities. Well, monsieur, tell Monsieur de Vaudreuil that we will hold the town so long as we can. And this for your private ear: at all hazard, get news of our plight to de Lévis! Tell him that Montcalm is dying, he can not live the night, and the command falls to him, and for God’s sake to send succour to us! We are starving; there are no provisions—not enough for two days—in the town! The temper of the colonial militia is most uncertain, and the regulars are demoralized and smarting from the defeat of the morning. We have lost heavily indeed. The walls on the land side are hardly capable of defence. Good-day, sir, and God speed! Now, Rouvigny, we still have something to do. Let de Vitré, who was taken a few moments since, be brought into the audience chamber. Summon the officers of my staff to attend me there. We have at least time to give short shrift to a traitor before the English are upon us.”

CHAPTER XV

GRAFTON TO THE RESCUE

ATTENDED by his captors, Denis de Vitré, in the hateful uniform of the English army, stood bound and facing the governor and his staff in the great hall of the castle. The sunlight sparkled in through the long, narrow lancet windows with their leaded, diamond-shaped panes, and made strange traceries upon the polished oaken floor. Pictures of the former governors of New France looked down upon the little scene from the walls. There was the dauntless Champlain, the veteran La Barre, the courtly du Quesne, and, conspicuous among the rest, the grim, eagle-like figure of the greatest of all—old Frontenac. The history of the province was somehow summed up in that old vaulted chamber, and de Vitré felt as if he were on trial before the heroism of the past as well as the disorganization of the present.

“Monsieur de Vitré, you are accused of having betrayed your country by piloting the English ships up the river,” began the governor.

“And who is my accuser, Monsieur de Ramsay?” answered de Vitré boldly.

“Common report.”

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“And does common report, sir, outweigh the word of honour of an officer and a gentleman?”

“Do you deny the charge, monsieur?”

“Sir, upon my word of honour, I declare it to be false in every particular!”

“But, sir, you were seen, recognised by officers stationed on Cap-Tourmente, on the forward part of the first English ship to pass the promontory. There was a group of English officers around you. You seemed to be pointing—is it not so, Major St. Luc?”

“It is indeed true, sir. I saw Monsieur de Vitré myself,” answered the officer promptly.

“If Monsieur St. Luc had seen me one half hour sooner he would have noticed me standing on the rail of the ship with a rope around my neck, about to be hanged as a common felon for refusing to show the way to the English.”

“Can this be true, sir?” asked the governor in surprise.

“On my faith it is. I give you my word, sir.”

“We don’t accept the word of a man accused of treachery, sir. Although I have no doubt you were on the rail, as you say, yet I have also no doubt but that the presence of the rope proved efficacious.”

“Mon Dieu, what an infamous charge!” cried de Vitré, white with rage and passion at this insult, striving to break away from his guards.

The governor watched him coolly until he ceased to struggle; then, nonchalantly taking a pinch of snuff:

“Be calm, monsieur,” he added. “I might have

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taken your word, but there is another circumstance which must be explained, and which makes it difficult to credit your story. The dress you wear—it is an English coat.”

“May it please Monsieur le Gouverneur,” spoke up the sergeant, “I saw him in the front rank of the English as they charged us. He carried a musket in his hand.”

“That is true,” answered de Vitré, “I was there.”

“Did you discharge the musket?”

“Yes, Monsieur le Chevalier—that is, I had done so.”

“At the troops of France?”

“Yes, but——”

A roar of rage swept through the hall as the men heard this damning admission.

“Why hear any more, Monsieur le Chevalier?” burst out Captain Rouvigny, voicing the thought of the others. “If he be not a self-convicted traitor, let him be shot as a deserter.”

“Messieurs, you must hear me! You shall!” exclaimed de Vitré. “I have been a prisoner in the English fleet. Through the connivance of a soldier in their marine I procured this uniform. I escaped from the ship last night. I hoped to reach the town and warn you and Monsieur de Montcalm of the expected attack on the town before morning, but I found it impossible to get away. I was compelled to stay in the ranks, and with difficulty escaped detection. I posed as a renegade or I would have been killed out of hand. My gun was not loaded

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with ball. I looked carefully to that, gentlemen. I swear to you I threw it away at the first moment and ran to join my friends. As there is a God in heaven, Monsieur le Chevalier, I speak the truth! I beg you to hold me until you can communicate with the English and verify my statement."

"We can not hold the town a week, Monsieur de Vitré," returned the governor quickly. "And to defer your punishment until the English take us would mean to let you escape scot-free. Frankly, I do not believe your story. What say you, gentlemen?"

"No, no, he is a traitor! Away with him!" cried one and another.

"Gentlemen, if I ever escape from this predicament," answered de Vitré boldly, "rest assured that you shall answer to me for your words and actions!"

"This is idle talk, monsieur," said the governor severely; "as the commandant of the garrison I shall order you to be shot at once, upon your own admissions, which you have failed to explain to our satisfaction, if there is no one here who will protest, or say a word in your defence."

"I will do that, Monsieur le Chevalier!" a clear voice cried out from the other end of the hall, as Anne de Rohan, followed by Josette, entered the door and advanced before the chevalier.

"Mademoiselle de Rohan!" exclaimed the governor in great surprise, rising to his feet the while, and bowing profoundly before her, a movement which, of course, was emulated by all the officers. "Here is no place for ladies."

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“ I am a witness in the case, Monsieur de Ramsay. Am I in time to save the life and honour of a brave man? ”

“ Time serves you, mademoiselle, but otherwise your effort is impossible. Monsieur de Vitré was seen this morning in the English ranks in their uniform—indeed he has it on now. He bore arms against us in the field. He admits it. He is believed to have acted as pilot for the English ships.”

“ ’Tis false, sir! ” interrupted the girl.

“ Thank God for that word, mademoiselle! ” cried de Vitré. “ If you believe in me I can face the rest of the world undaunted.”

“ Silence, Monsieur de Vitré!—Why say you this, mademoiselle? ” asked the governor.

“ Because there is an English officer wounded and a prisoner in my house, who has learned by chance of Monsieur de Vitré’s predicament and who vows that he is innocent; that he did not pilot the ships; that he refused to do so even at the peril of his life, and that he had been held a close prisoner on the English ships since his capture.”

“ Mademoiselle, ” the governor questioned, “ how comes there to be an English prisoner in your house? ”

“ One of your horsemen cut him down on the field, monsieur, picked him up on his horse and carried him into the street, and dropped him before my door, thinking him dead. Monsieur de Vitré, who was captured there by these soldiers, saw him as he was being taken away and told me to take care of him as he was his friend.”

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“Friend to an Englishman!” shouted one of the impetuous officers. “Another confirmation!”

“Silence!” cried the governor. “Proceed, mademoiselle.”

“Dr. Arnoux dressed the young Englishman’s wounds. He is a captain in the English navy. When he recovered consciousness I mentioned Monsieur de Vitré’s predicament, and he insisted that I must come to tell you this story, and if you doubted it I was to ask you to send an officer to question him.”

“Why came he not himself, then?”

“He is too severely wounded, sir, and the doctor forbade him to move.”

“Be seated, mademoiselle. Let us withdraw, gentlemen, and consider this communication for a moment,” said the governor, after reflecting deeply for a short time.

The Chevalier de Ramesay and his officers stepped to the other end of the apartment and intently consulted together, leaving Anne standing near de Vitré and his guards.

“O mademoiselle,” cried de Vitré to her, addressing her despite the presence of the soldiers, “this is a public place in which to address you, but I stand in the shadow of death and I must needs take any opportunity which fate provides me. You have long known of my devotion to you. I have not disguised it nor do I wish to make further protestations to you. I only want to thank you, as a man dying, for the brave stand you have taken in attempting to save not only my life, but what is dearer to

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me—my honour. Thank Captain Grafton, too, for his good words, though I feel they will be useless. The evidence against me is strong. This cursed uniform is the last straw. Rankling under the defeat of the morning, and with the certainty of surrender before them, they are too bitter to weigh well what they are doing. They want a scapegoat, and here is one ready to hand. Mademoiselle, one last favour. It means but little perhaps to you but much to me. I can not go to you. Will you not reach hither your hand?"

"They must not kill you, Monsieur de Vitré! 'Tis most unjust!" cried the girl piteously, stepping over to him. "As for my hand—" She stretched it out, and, though he was bound and tied, nothing could have exceeded the courtly grace with which he bent over it and pressed a long kiss upon it. She held it tightly against his lips.

"There is my hand, monsieur!" she exclaimed, as the soldiers withdrew a little, out of consideration for her evident grief. "I would that my heart went with it."

"Monsieur de Vitré, mademoiselle," said the governor, returning to his seat, "we have carefully considered the testimony of Mademoiselle de Rohan and are of the opinion that it is not sufficiently important to cause us to delay the execution. I fear that a few days may see the English in possession of the town, and that, of course, means that you, sir, would escape all punishment. As for the testimony of the English officer, he is in honour

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bound to extricate his ally from his predicament, and we question——”

“Who questions the word of Captain Philip Grafton?” cried a stern voice, as a strangely ill-assorted pair entered the hall. One of the two was a small slender man, only partially clothed, whose face was ghastly pale and who held his left hand pressed against his right shoulder. He would have fallen to the floor but that he was supported by the encircling arm of a huge old man in the livery of the Rohans. The two were Philip and Jean-Rénaud.

“Grafton!” cried de Vitré. “Thank God, you have come!”

“Jean-Rénaud,” exclaimed Anne, “how dared you to bring this gentleman here! Against the doctor’s orders and mine! His life——”

“Peace, mademoiselle!” interrupted Grafton. “I came here because I feared what has happened, that they would not accept your testimony. Your servant but obeyed my orders, he had no choice!”

“But your life, monsieur!” said Anne.

“I peril it gladly to save the honour of a brave gentleman, though an enemy. Monsieur le Gouverneur, you are about to execute this gentleman?”

There was a dead silence in the room.

“It is true,” answered Mademoiselle de Rohan.

“It must not go on!” cried Grafton. “I swear to you on my honour as an English gentleman that Monsieur de Vitré is innocent! He is no traitor; on the contrary, he deserves your highest commendation. He refused to pilot the ships in, even

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though, by the orders of the admiral, he was placed on the rail of the ship with a rope flung around his neck, and men awaited the signal to hang him."

Murmurs rose from the officers in the hall.

"Why was he not hanged, then, Sir Englishman?" asked the governor.

"Because an English officer interfered, one who hated to see a brave man sacrificed, and through his influence with the general, who was his friend, and the admiral, who is his captain, he saved Monsieur de Vitré's life."

"Do you know this to be a fact, monsieur?"

"I do, monsieur."

"Who was the officer that saved his life?"

"I."

The truth in the answer was patent in every line of the blood-stained figure. There was a burst of applause from the officers in the room as his words carried conviction to their hearts.

"Who piloted the ships, then?"

"Some fishermen, and some of us came up the river without a pilot."

"But this uniform?"

"I have no doubt that Monsieur de Vitré can explain that. I know that last night he was held a close prisoner on the Sutherland."

"Monsieur, forgive the question. I wish to be quite certain. You are not saying this to save an ally?"

"Sir, I have given you my word of honour, the word of an officer of the King. As God is my judge, sir, I have told the truth! Hold Monsieur de Vitré

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until you can communicate with Admiral Saunders or General Townshend. Send out a special flag now, and if the facts be not as I have stated I will answer for them with my own life. You hold me prisoner, sir. I am alone in your power. I would stake anything upon de Vitré's honour. Indeed"—he turned pale and caught at his breast again where the red stains showed under his hand—"I believe that I have staked my life—for——"

He stopped, his glance wavered toward Anne.

"For you—your lover—mademoiselle!"

He swayed back and forth and fell heavily to the floor at her feet.

"Release Monsieur de Vitré!" cried de Ramsay.

Anne de Rohan instantly sank to the floor and knelt by the prostrate form of the English captain.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" she cried. "He is dying!"

There was a look on her face, in her eyes, for which de Vitré would have given all he possessed. As the soldiers unbound him, he sprang to her side.

"You love him!" he cried. "You love him!"

CHAPTER XVI

“ THOU SHALT NOT COVET ”

ANNE DE ROHAN had admitted to herself as she had watched Grafton before he recovered consciousness that she loved him. If there had been any doubt in her mind of the permanence of her feelings of bygone days and their development from the childish devotion to the deep passionate love which filled her soul, the tell-tale kiss she had pressed upon his forehead when she thought him dying would have undeceived her. And she realized it more entirely at that moment when she saw him lying white and still at her feet in the hall. That something of her feeling had expressed itself in her looks she did not doubt.

But it is one thing to admit a fact in the secret recesses of one's own consciousness, or even to look one's feelings, and another to have it proclaimed on the housetops. She bitterly resented de Vitré's impulsive allegation, and that it was true but enhanced her indignation against him and against herself. How could she, a de Rohan, love this commoner of America? How could she, a French woman, bestow her affection upon an enemy? How could she give her heart to a man who wore an-

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other woman's picture above his own? Everything stood in the way of any future relationship whatever between them.

And yet how magnificently he had come to the rescue of de Vitré! How nobly he had stood forth in the hall a moment since! O God, it was true! She had betrayed herself; the world would know that she had given away her love to this English officer—an enemy. She felt and saw the pointing fingers of her society; she heard the word “Traïtress! Traïtress!” in the air. She would not, she could not!

Yet, how he had looked at her when he clutched her dress with that fevered question, “Are you in love with Monsieur de Vitré?” She was afraid of herself. If he should recognise her and plead with her could she resist him? No, she feared not, she was sure she could not. She loved him too well to do so. Of that point she was absolutely certain, and of another fact consequent upon the first, as well. She did not love Denis de Vitré. She admired, respected, esteemed, even liked him—but love, no. And yet here was a safeguard. Betrothed to him she could better struggle against the pleadings of her heart. She did not yet realize what her long-dormant feelings toward Philip would be, or how powerful a hold he was to have upon her.

She would make the sacrifice, she swiftly resolved. She was sadly compromised in her society, anyway, by her visit to the château and by her public advocacy of de Vitré. As for the rest, he was a gentleman of position and rank, originally of a Bre-

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ton family scarcely less ancient than her own. He had given evidence of his heroism, and he loved France. She would do it—to protect herself against Grafton. De Vitré should be her anchor.

As these thoughts passed with the rapidity of lightning itself through her brain, she rose to her feet, leaving Grafton, who already showed signs of returning consciousness, to the ministrations of Jean-Rénaud and Josette. Better make assurance double sure against her heart.

“Monsieur de Vitré,” she exclaimed, clearly enough to be heard by all the room, “you forget yourself! How could I love this stranger, an enemy of France? You are not yourself; these trials have bewildered you, and I have but one answer to your charge. You have asked me again and again to—to—in short, monsieur, are you still——”

“Mademoiselle de Rohan!” cried de Vitré, clasping her hand, “is it—will you——”

“Monsieur, I esteem you, I regard you, I admire you. I am willing, with the consent of my grandfather the marquis—to—be——”

“Monsieur de Ramesay,” cried de Vitré, turning to the little group, who had been regarding the couple intently, “Mademoiselle de Rohan makes me the happiest of men! She deigns to honour me by promising me her hand.”

“Look to your English friend, Monsieur de Vitré,” promptly answered the governor, “and quickly!”

“Maledictions upon me!” cried de Vitré, kneeling beside the two servants. “A surgeon, quick!”

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The physician, who had been previously summoned, was speedily forthcoming, and under his ministrations the flow of blood was stanchèd and Grafton presently opened his eyes again.

“My friend,” cried de Vitré, as Grafton recovered consciousness, “what can I say? What can I do to repay you? On the ship yonder you saved my life. A moment since, in this hall, you saved my honour, and I believe it is to you I owe my greatest happiness.”

“And what is that?” whispered Grafton.

“Mademoiselle has consented to do me the honour of becoming my wife.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Grafton, as if stricken again.

“What is it, what is it?” cried the Frenchman, “what can I do?”

“You might have let me die, de Vitré. But there, ’tis nothing. Take me hence.”

“Where will you be taken, monsieur?” asked the governor.

“He shall go back to my house,” interrupted Anne, “whence he came. And you, Monsieur de Vitré, will accompany——”

“Your pardon, mademoiselle,” said de Ramesay, “I believe Monsieur de Vitré to be innocent of all the charges that have been made against him, but my duty compels me to detain him in the castle until I can communicate with the English. One of my aides will accompany you home.”

“’Tis useless, sir. I have here a faithful guard. If you will have some of your soldiers bring a litter to carry Monsieur Grafton, it will be enough.”

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“ Watch over him well, mademoiselle! ” cried de Vitré, as the soldiers bore him from the room. “ I owe him much—everything! ”

“ Trust me, monsieur, ” replied the young girl. “ Monsieur le Gouverneur, Lieutenant de Vitré, gentlemen, I bid you adieu! ”

With a sweeping courtesy she left the room.

Attended by Josette and guarded by Jean-Rénaud, with brimming eyes and a leaden heart in her bosom, she walked by the litter as the soldiers bore it through the street. With downcast head she moved, yet no movement of her wounded charge escaped her. Grafton lay on the stretcher with his eyes closed. Once, as the bearers stumbled, he opened them with a sharp exclamation of pain. Instantly she bent over him. As her gaze fell upon his face he slowly turned his head away, as if the sight were too much for him and he could not bear to look upon her.

“ Are you in pain, monsieur? ”

“ Ah, Mademoiselle de Couëdic! ” he answered, “ such pain as I trust you may never know. ”

“ Why did you turn your head from me? ”

“ Mademoiselle, ” he answered softly, still not looking at her, “ I am thinking of some pregnant words in an old book which I had read to me when I was a child. ”

“ And those words, monsieur? ”

“ ‘ Thou shalt not covet. ’ You understand the English? ” he whispered.

“ I understand—everything, monsieur. ”

“Thou shalt not Covet”

“Monsieur de Vitré,” said the governor, “if you give me your parole you may have the freedom of the château. I congratulate you first upon your acquittal, and more, monsieur, upon the prize you have gained. Faith, sir, yours is like to be the one victory of the arms of France! Your hand, young sir.”

“Monsieur le Chevalier has insulted me,” answered de Vitré, folding his arms and bowing. “He has accused me of treachery; he has doubted my word. He has ordered me to be shot. I owe nothing to Monsieur de Ramesay. I can not take his hand.”

“Tut, tut, boy!” cried the governor. “I am old enough to be your father. If I did these things it was because I believed it necessary for the protection of the state. Come, I knew your father. You can’t refuse an old man, who acknowledges that he was wrong; who says—hard words for a soldier, my young friend—that he is sorry. Your hand, sir.”

“And my heart, Monsieur le Chevalier!” cried de Vitré, impulsively springing forward.

“Ah, that’s well!” answered the governor smiling. “It strikes me that you ought to be happy rather than anything else over the affair. You are rehabilitated, and you have gained the fairest and sweetest woman in New France for a wife. Is it not so, gentlemen?”

“Monsieur de Vitré,” said Captain Rouvigny, shamefacedly, “in behalf of my comrades here, I humbly tender you our apologies, and beg you to

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vouchsafe to us your forgiveness while you accept our congratulations. On my word, sir, there is not a man in the room who does not envy you, and no one is here who would not gladly stand with a halter around his neck if it were to be taken from his shoulders by the fair hands of Mademoiselle de Rohan."

"Messieurs," returned de Vitré sternly and coldly, "you are not old soldiers, friends of my father, and I decline."

"Very well," broke in Rouvigny, his cheek flushing, "if you will have it so, monsieur, I and all of us are at your service."

"Will some gentleman lend me his sword?" cried de Vitré. "Ah, thank you!" he exclaimed, seizing the nearest one of many proffered him. "You first, Monsieur Rouvigny. On guard!"

"Messieurs," cried the governor, who had watched the whole scene with much amusement, "is this the time for private brawling? Put up your swords, both of you! Here, Captain Rouvigny! Monsieur de Vitré, I command you! New France at this hour hath sore need for every sword and every hand. Our affairs are desperate. Monsieur de Montcalm dies, Monsieur de Vaudreuil abandons us. We starve alone in this wretched, doomed town! Forgive these gentlemen, de Vitré. They had no personal animus. They but spoke from their soldierly sense of duty. 'Twas love of country moved them, as it has moved you. Hands all, gentlemen! What, you hesitate! This is twice this day I have stooped to plead! Ah, that's well, messieurs! Join

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with me in the old cry, *Vive la nouvelle France!*
Now to the walls with you! Monsieur de Vitré,
though I restrain you to the château for the present,
you may still be of service to me—to the state.
Attend me in my cabinet, I pray you.”

BOOK IV
LOVE WILL HAVE ITS WAY

CHAPTER XVII

RECOGNITION

GRAFTON still lay on the great bed in the upper chamber, although it was the evening after the day of the battle and the visit to the château. He had been promptly put there again by the faithful Jean-Rénaud when his bearers had reached the house, and after a quiet night and a long day of perfect rest he felt much better. Dr. Arnoux, who had called to see him in the morning, had reprehended him severely for his excursion of the day before. Although the surgeon had been filled with generous admiration at the devotion and courage Grafton had exhibited in behalf of de Vitré in the château, he had strictly forbidden him to rise again from the bed for some time at least. With the remembrance of his unfortunate collapse in the château at the trial of de Vitré, the Englishman was inclined to heed his advice. Indeed, he could do no less, since his uniform, as a further preventive, had been taken away by Jean-Rénaud under the orders of Mademoiselle de Rohan.

The tedium of the day had been relieved by two

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short visits from the mistress of the household. Had she consulted her inclination only, she would not have left him for a moment, but she did not dare trust herself long in his presence. Yet bare hospitality, the consideration due a sick man whom fate had thrown upon her hands, constrained her at least to inquire as to his health and to supervise in person the meagre arrangements which the straitened circumstances necessitated by the rigorous siege of Quebec permitted her to make for his comfort.

Her visits had been brief, however, and while they lasted she had deliberately stood in the shadow of the bed-curtains, so that no opportunity for a fair look upon her face had been vouchsafed him—a thing he was thirsting for and yet which he felt utterly unable to bring about. Indeed, his thoughts had been so busy with her personality and her image, that the time, which might have dragged as only time can linger, leaden-footed in the sick chamber, had passed before he noticed it.

Yet he was very dissatisfied with the situation. There was something about the young demoiselle which moved him powerfully, something he could not explain. The thought of her betrothal to de Vitré filled him with a certain jealous dismay—he could not exactly tell why. It was hardly possible he could be in love with her himself, a girl he had seen but a day since! He seemed to have known, or to have met her before, though. How was it? De Couëdic! And yet——

But what could he do? Nothing. He was mas-

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ter of himself now—in the full possession of his faculties, with no excuse of weakness, wounds, or fever, that is—and there could be no possible reason for so personal an appeal to her as he had made when in fevered confusion he had asked her if she loved de Vitré.

During the day he was attended by a strange servant, and saw neither Jean-Rénaud nor Josette, either of whom might have enlightened him had not both been kept from him by the orders of their mistress. The conversation between the two, therefore, on the occasion of these two visits was necessarily brief: confined on her part to inquiries as to his well-being, his needs, and desires, and upon his part to expressions of gratitude for her kindness, and earnest deprecations of the trouble he was giving her and her household.

As for her, every time she approached him she longed to declare herself. With the passionate abandon of a French woman who loved literally for the first time, who found herself in the actual presence of a long-cherished ideal, before a realization of her girlish and maidenly dreams, she would fain have thrown herself upon his breast—into his arms. She longed to gather him to her heart and lavish upon him those treasures of affection which all the gallantry, courage, and devotion of de Vitré could not evoke. And all this in the face of the keen jealousy she suffered over the locket he wore, and the resentment she felt, in despite of the precautions she took to prevent it, that he had not recognised her—which was unreasonable but essentially feminine.

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But she had controlled herself like an American. The marquis himself could not have been more coolly and coldly polite than she. As for Grafton, he had not yet, to use his own expression, "got his bearings." Never in his life had he been so moved by the presence of a woman as during the last two days. He could hardly reason about it clearly in his present condition. But at last he thought that the explanation of this infatuation must lie in his weakness and her beauty, for with singular fatuity he had not succeeded in discovering any other reason for his interest.

In the first place, owing to the precautions she had taken, he had not yet had that clear, full sight of the girl for which he longed. She had always been in a half light, or concealed in some shadow, or with face turned away, when she had been with him. He might have looked upon her carefully in the hall of the Château St. Louis, but his mind was bent upon other things then, and his physical weakness and the resulting collapse had possibly impaired his judgment as well as his vision.

Besides all this, she had informed him that her name was de Couëdic, which appellation not only told him nothing, but had actually thrown him entirely on the wrong track. By no possibility could he have imagined that the Countess de Rohan, whom he had left a child a few years before in the Château de Josselin in Brittany, would be found now inside the walls of Quebec in America.

Josette he had scarcely seen since he was wounded, and he paid no attention to her anyway in

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the presence of Anne—one does not look at the moon when the sun is by. The same might be said of Jean-Rénaud. The sergeant had not impressed himself very deeply upon Grafton's consciousness when he had been held a prisoner at the château, and the changed uniform and dress, together with the lapse of time, had prevented his being recognised. Anne had been very careful not to call the names of her two servitors in his presence after she had recognised him, and during the day he had not seen either of them. Luck, too, was against him. Indeed, how could he have recognised in this glorious specimen of glowing womanhood the thin, undeveloped little girl of other days?

Anne de Rohan was now eighteen years of age and in the first flush of beautiful womanhood. Of medium height, with a figure which combined the lovely proportions of her American ancestry with the daintiness and delicacy of the women of France; with a clear, cool, pale yet not pallid face, exquisite features, scarlet lips, proudly, ay, even disdainfully elegant in their graceful curves; deep blue eyes, so deep that they were almost violet when filled with feeling or glowing with passion, and the whole framed in her midnight hair; she was indeed a rarely beautiful woman. The performance of her maturity was indeed greater than her childhood's promise had been. Only a prophet might have seen the one in the past, or a seer recognise the other in the present.

A strange concatenation of circumstances had brought the girl to New France. After Grafton's

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departure from the Château de Josselin she had drooped and faded. She was growing too rapidly, thought the marquis and those who advised him, who never suspected the real reason for her ill health. She actually had pined for the young man who had left her behind and yet had taken her childish heart with him. But of this, of course, she said nothing, so the wise men concluded that she had studied too hard, had been too closely confined, and so on. The physicians who were consulted, after the simple remedies of the time had proved unavailing, finally recommended a sea-voyage.

As it happened, the marquis had just then been summoned to the King to take part as a commander in one of the campaigns of the Seven Years' War, his experience and ability being too valuable to allow him to be neglected. The old man, therefore, had taken advantage of the departure of a heavy French squadron, carrying General, the Marquis de Montcalm, his suite, and some troops, to send his grand-daughter to Canada under the charge of the general, an old friend, who had been appointed to the supreme military command in New France. An ancient relative of the house of Rohan lived in affluence and ease in Quebec, and to her the marquis consigned the young countess.

She had remained in New France with this estimable lady ever since her arrival, for two reasons: one, it had been difficult—well-nigh impossible, indeed, on account of the number of English ships cruising to intercept the traffic between Canada and France—to get away; and the other, as the marquis

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was still engaged in the French army, she would have had no place to which to go, no place where she could have lived so comfortably and safely if she returned to France. The marquis was determined that he would not throw her into the hotbed of dissipation and intrigue of which Louis XV was the focus, in Paris or at Versailles.

Her health, much benefited by the voyage, was soon completely restored, and with her great beauty, her ancient name, her powerful grandfather, the great estates to which she was sole heiress, she became, as childhood gave way to womanhood, the undoubted belle of New France. The officers of the army, the sea officers from the various ships or squadrons which from time to time arrived from France, the young Canadian noblesse, all laid their hearts at her feet. She could have chosen any one from among them, but as yet none of them had succeeded in touching her heart. Most of them she liked and the society of many of them she enjoyed.

In all the gaieties of Canada—and the traditions of France were royally maintained in the New World—she participated. Yet with native dignity and pride she held herself aloof from the dissolute set surrounding the able but unscrupulous Intendant, Bigot; and if she acquired knowledge of the world, she neither lost her innocence of heart nor sacrificed her purity of soul in the attainment.

Among the many she had met who had paid court to her, the man she most liked, and who was, in fact, perhaps the finest among them, was the

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young sailor to whom, in fear of her love for Grafton, she had just engaged herself. She had refused his suit many times before, but with undaunted gallantry he had persisted in his attentions.

The two had many ties in common. They both came from Breton families. Upon the score of wealth, breeding, and personality de Vitré was an entirely suitable companion for her. In but one particular did he fall below the required standard. His family, while old, was not to be mentioned in the same breath with hers, and as he was only the son of a cadet of his house, a simple chevalier, holding the rank of lieutenant in the navy, he was from that point of view no match for her.

How her grandfather, the marquis, would regard the engagement upon which she had so suddenly and capriciously entered was problematical. In fact, she felt that he would disapprove; but while she was wholly French in her training and in her ideas she was not for nothing the daughter of an American mother. She combined a determination to exercise a certain liberty of choice as to the disposition of her heart and person with the stubborn, inflexible will power of her grandfather. Therefore she could meet the certain antagonism of the marquis with two weapons—his own and her mother's. She trusted also that he might be won to her views; she was sure he would rather see her dead than have her marry an Englishman, an enemy, and she hoped, when she explained to him that in utter despair she had thrown herself into the arms of the one to escape the promptings of her heart, which

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would fain have thrown her into the arms of the other, that he would acquiesce.

She had no one to advise her, poor child! The ancient relative to whose care she had been committed, had died a few weeks since of the cares, anxieties and privations brought about by the siege. An ordinary French girl would have gone to a convent under the circumstances, but Anne possessed a certain amount of self-reliance and independence, and she resolved, for the time being, at least, to remain at her own house with old Jean-Rénaud and Josette. If the English were driven away she made up her mind that at any hazard she would take ship for France. If, on the contrary, the English captured the town she would probably be sent back a prisoner. So she awaited the issue of the campaign, in the meantime busying herself with caring for the sick and wounded.

She would have appealed for advice to the Marquis de Montcalm as her father's friend and an honourable man in whom she could trust, and upon whose judgment she could depend, but the exigencies of the siege had so fully occupied that general that she was not willing to trouble him with her private affairs, and now it was too late.

It was evening. She stood by the dormer window looking out on the street. Grafton watched her closely from the bed. She had stopped a moment to inquire for him, her third and to be her last visit that day, and then, attracted by a commotion outside, she had gone to the window.

A little *cortège* filled the street below. Some sol-

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diers bore upon their shoulders a rude wooden box. Over it was laid the golden-lilied white flag of France, and upon the flag a handsome sword. A half-dozen men, holding pine torches whose flickering, wavering flames cast an uncertain illumination over the scene, walked by the makeshift coffin. Immediately behind came a few priests, and then Monsieur de Ramesay and his staff, and a little huddle of townspeople—the idle and the curious.

There were no strains of martial music; there was neither blare of bugle nor roll of drum, nor tolling of bells. There was no ceremony, no pomp; there were no women even.

Anne leaned her head upon the casement, her tears falling softly. Her body shook with sobs. Grafton stared at her keenly and curiously. There was a strange pain at his heart when he saw her weep.

Presently the funeral procession passed the window. The lights from the torches, almost at a level with her face in the window of the low-studded old house, threw it into high and bright relief. She was off her guard, not thinking of herself or even of Grafton, for the moment. It was the first time that he had been able to see her well. Suggestions of the truth came across him with a sense of shock, and yet he did not quite recognise her. He was not sure. It could not be.

“Mademoiselle,” he said softly, “you told me your name was——”

“De Couëdic. Yes, monsieur,” she answered,

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with her eyes still fixed upon the street, though he noticed that she turned her face away from him.

Was she discovered at last? Could he suspect, she thought.

"I had thought," he continued, then he stopped.

"Mademoiselle, you weep," he said.

"Yes, monsieur."

"Who passes in the street? Those lights, what are they?"

"Monsieur, a funeral."

"Whose funeral, mademoiselle?"

"Alas, monsieur, I think it is the burial of New France!"

"Mademoiselle?"

"'Tis the funeral of the Marquis de Montcalm, monsieur. He is being borne to his last rest."

"He was a brave man, Mademoiselle de Couëdic, and he died as a soldier would fain die, in the front of the battle line."

"He was my grandfather's friend, monsieur, and mine. He was so good to me. I know his wife, his children. He loved them and longed to go back to them. But he loved his country, his duty, his King, more than all, monsieur, and so he stayed, and now he will never go back any more."

She put her face down in her hands and sobbed bitterly. People are as little children when they weep. Where had he seen that bowed head? Heavens! was it not upon his own shoulder? Why, the picture was the same! The moonlight was stealing through the casement just as before. She wore something filmy and white. It might have been that

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night-robe that had enshrouded the slender girl. His heart beat so that it nearly suffocated him, and yet—de Couëdic! It could not be!

“Mademoiselle,” he said, all the passion surging in his soul quivering in his voice, “do not weep. By Heaven, I do not know how or why it is, but to see you weep tears my very heart! Can it be that I saw you but yesterday and loved you, mademoiselle?”

She turned and faced him. The feeling in his voice, the look in his eyes, as she stared at him, so perfectly matched her own she had no will nor power to withstand any longer. Deliberately she fetched a light from behind the curtain and set it down on the table at the head of his bed; then she stood where the full light would fall on her face, and drawing herself up threw out her arms wide before him.

“Monsieur!” she cried. “Oh, do you not know me?”

“Is it thou, Little France?” he exclaimed, dazed and bewildered by his thoughts. “Who could have thought it? How beautiful!”

She dashed away the tears with her hand. She thought he had not yet recognised her, as he lay spellbound gazing on her matchless beauty. Her scarlet lips quivered a moment, then shaped themselves for sound, and from her full, soft throat came the notes of the little Breton cradle-song which he had heard her sing in the garden of the *Hesperides*, *Toutouie, la la!* But no mother ever sang it to child as she sang it then.

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“Anne!” he cried. “The Lady Anne! Fool that I was! How blind! I should have known you! I should have recognised your footstep even had I lain dead on your doorstep!”

“Sir Philip! Sir Philip!” she exclaimed. “How could you forget? But I knew! Oh, my love, my love!”

She sank on her knees at the bedside again and leaned over him.

“But you are betrothed to de Vitré?” he cried in jealous anguish.

“Ah, Philip, my knight!” she murmured, “what matters it? ’Tis you I love, I love!”

She threw her arms around his neck; their lips met in one long kiss charged with dreams and ideals of years. The joy, the surprise, were almost too great for him. He closed his eyes; in his weak state he thought he would have fainted. It had all come upon him suddenly with such a shock. She had known it for two days. He had been so desperately wounded.

She was the stronger of the two then and she recovered herself the sooner. Something assisted her, perhaps. Her throbbing breast as it lay upon his own was met by the pressure of something round and hard. The little locket! It flashed into her jealous mind in an instant.

“Monsieur Grafton,” she said, drawing away from him with a sudden change of mood, “you not only forgot me, you not only did not know me, but you—— That locket, sir?”

“Yes, mademoiselle,” answered Grafton simply,

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for it was impossible for him to deceive this woman, or to evade the question.

“ Ah! Carrying another woman’s face over your heart and speaking love to me! ”

“ O Anne! ” he cried, “ there may be another woman in the locket, there is only yourself in my heart! ”

“ Whose picture is there? ”

“ I may not tell. ”

“ Monsieur will not tell? ”

“ Nay, I can not. ’Tis honour seals my lips. ”

He wished he had never given the promise so lightly uttered in the cabin of the Sutherland, but, being given, it must be faithfully kept.

“ The honour of a woman? ” she asked.

“ Of a man, mademoiselle, of a soldier, of a friend. ”

“ Explain yourself, monsieur. ”

“ Mademoiselle Anne, I can not, but I give you my word of honour as an English officer, the word of an American gentleman, your mother’s land, mademoiselle, that the lady of the locket is nothing to me, that I cherish the face of no woman except your own. Ever since those days when I was held a prisoner in the old château, since the hour—do you not recall it?—when I carried you in my arms and kissed you first, I have loved you. I have thought and dreamed of you alone among woman-kind. When I went away from France I left my heart behind. You have had it—you have it now. ”

“ But the locket? ” she persisted, while the

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music of his words rang sweetly in the most secret chamber of her heart.

“ Forget it.”

“ Take it off, then.”

“ I can not.”

“ Can not? And yet she is nothing to you, you say? ”

“ Even so, yet that little thing I can not do. I have sworn never to part with it until——”

“ Ah, monsieur! ” she continued bitterly, turning away. “ You see! What can I believe? ”

“ Believe only that I love you; trust in my honour; you will laugh at this, we will laugh together, when I am able to tell you some day. In the meantime have faith in me. Won't you trust me? ” he continued, as she shook her head. “ Twice I might have died if it had not been for you. Twice you have called me back to life. My life is yours, and yours is mine. I will not be denied.” He turned and stretched out his one uninjured hand. “ Come back. If there is the faintest feeling of affection in your own heart, if you know what love is, you must know 'tis here! ”

She hesitated, she moved nearer, hesitated again. He strove to rise, wrenched his arm, covered his eyes with his hand, stifled a moan. That decided her. He suffered, and she fled to him once again, a little murmuring cry, an inarticulate caress on her lips.

Oh, the ecstasy of that moment!

We live long years for the emotions of an hour, the pleasure of a second. We waste lifetimes in

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solitary kisses, and the sum of dreams is gone in a single touch.

Anne de Rohan was promised to de Vitré. She meant to keep her promise. She was wildly, bitterly jealous of the woman in the locket, too, in spite of his assurances, although she really believed them, and she had never intended this. She knew she could never be anything to Grafton. Her reason, her sense, told her that this was folly, but the determination of her mind was abrogated by the feelings of her heart. Perhaps because she knew there was nothing beyond she gave way the more easily to her emotions. The flood-gates were open again, the long-pent-up floods were out once more. Ah, this time there would be no confining them again!

She knelt beside that old bed, she slipped her fair, round young arm underneath his neck and lavished caresses upon him. Her hands played with the curls upon his forehead. Her eyes looked love in his, her voice whispered endearments in broken tones; all her being went out to meet his. She was trembling with her passion, nervous at his touch; she could not be quiet, she must move or die. She hovered over him like an angel of love and tenderness.

He lay there so white, so pale, so weak, so happy, with a love that was as strong as hers looking from his eyes. His one free hand she held tightly, pressed it to her breast, kissed it, fondled it again and again.

And how beautiful she was! One look in the unfathomable depths of those great eyes might have

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told him the truth before. The sound of that voice quivering with joy that was almost pain should have spoken to him. How blind he had been—a fool! He forgot five years of separation and grieved that he had lost one day! The past faded away, the future lay in the distance, the present was their own.

Presently, as the first fierce intensity of her passion spent itself, she laid her head upon his breast and listened in sweet surrender to the beating of his heart, hearing that heart throbbing for her, only for her. The room was very still. Words were never coined to express what they felt, and neither spoke.

It was dark outside. The night had fallen. Clouds had swept across the face of the moon, hiding its splendour. The sky was overcast, muttered peals of thunder rolled swiftly through the chamber. The candle had burned itself out, it flickered away; the gray shadows grew into darkness. It was deep and still there. In that silence heart whispered to heart in language which gods and lovers may understand. By-and-bye her arm was slipped from beneath his head. Had hours or moments passed, or had they lived an eternity since the kiss of recognition? Her head, that had lain so lightly upon his breast, was lifted. The sweet lips, whose colour he could dream of even in the darkness, melted once again upon his own—and she was gone.

He had not moved or stirred. After she left him the sweet illusion was still heavy upon him. He could feel the presence of her head, the perfume, the

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fragrance of her hair, the beating of her heart. He closed his eyes in the darkness. Her lips seemed to brush his own again—again.

Did he sleep, did he dream? All night long she seemed to be by his side.

CHAPTER XVIII

FALLS THE FLAG OF FRANCE

DE RAMESAY stood again in his private office in the shot-racked Château St. Louis. From the English batteries at Point Lévis the cannon were continuously firing upon the already ruined lower town, and even upon the castle itself. From Townshend's intrenchments on the landward side the heavy siege guns which had been landed from the British ships were raining shot and shell upon the upper town and the citadel. Fiédmont, the French chief of artillery, was making what reply he could. The fleet of Admiral Saunders in the basin had been moving up toward the lower town during the past week, and as de Ramesay watched them, large boats full of troops were even then being landed on the meadows and flats at the mouth of the St. Charles River and were being drawn up in columns under cover of the ships' batteries, as if preparing to approach and storm the gate nearest the bridge.

De Ramesay had just come in from a tour of the walls. It was a hopeless outlook indeed before the governor. He had done his best, but the end was approaching. Sad indeed is the moment when we realize that our best is unavailing. The rations of

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all had been reduced and reduced until starvation stared them in the face. No part of the town was safe now from the English fire. The very château itself in which he stood was riddled with shells. There was a great gaping hole in the roof of his cabinet, through which the rain poured dismally.

The temper of the garrison had grown worse and worse. Nothing whatever had been heard from de Lévis. De Ramesay felt that if an assault were delivered it could not be met. His garrison originally consisted of one hundred and fifty troops of the line, some four or five hundred colony troops, and the local militia, but had been much reduced by death, wounds, and starvation, and was growing less every day. The colonial soldiers and militia had been deserting in handfuls.

Presently Captain Rouvigny entered.

"Monsieur," he said, saluting, "a body of merchants, headed by Monsieur Daine, are here to see you, and——"

"Bid them attend me in the great hall of the château, captain," interrupted the governor gloomily, "and summon the officers of my staff. Let some one go for Monsieur Fiédmont, if he can be spared from the walls. We need his counsel."

"I omitted to state, monsieur," continued the young officer, "that the merchants are accompanied by the officers of the city militia."

"Let them all come together, I will see them all. I know what it means," said de Ramesay despondently.

A few moments after he entered the great hall

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of the bullet-ridden castle. Many of the portraits which had adorned it had been destroyed by the fire of the enemy. Grim old Frontenac, the unconquerable, however, still kept watch and ward over the territory he had loved, now fast slipping into the hands of the hated English. Had he been in de Vaudreuil's place, thought de Ramesay, they might not now be in such a pass.

Through the broken window-panes the rain beat and the wind swept in mournful harmony with the thoughts of the people who crowded the room. At the lower end were congregated a body of the most influential citizens of the town. Their plain but rich dress, comfortable cloaks, prosperous appearance, proclaimed that they were men of substance and condition. A little apart from them stood the officers of the colonial militia in bedraggled, weather-stained uniforms.

The merchants faced de Ramesay boldly. The eyes of the citizen soldiery sank to the ground, and they looked everywhere but at him. They shifted uneasily under the stern gaze of the veteran commander, while their hands played nervously with their sword-hilts. De Ramesay was attended by the officers of his staff, able soldiers all; some of them were drenched with rain and covered with marks of their exposure to the inclement weather, which showed they had just come from the ramparts. Among them were Rouvigny, St. Luc, Fiédmont, and Joännès the town major, and with them de Vitré, still under restraint by de Ramesay's order.

The governor stood at the great table with his

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officers grouped around him. The merchants and militia officers drifted together at the opposite side. A stranger would have instantly recognised that here were two parties to debate a serious proposition. Sadness was the predominating note in de Ramesay's face; haughty pride and contempt flashed from the eyes of the nobles and professional soldiers at his back; dogged determination was evidenced in every line in the portly figures of the merchants; and stubborn shame spoke from the drooped heads of the militia officers.

"Messieurs," said the governor quietly, "you have asked an audience for a purpose which I can but too well divine. Will you speak your mind and have done with it? The gentlemen of the counter first."

He turned inquiringly to the merchants, but no one apparently cared to break the silence. No one wished to assume the stigma of being the first to make the proposition in furtherance of which they had assembled.

"What, gentlemen!" continued de Ramesay sarcastically, "are your desires so base that none of you have even courage to mention them? Monsieur Daine, it was at your house, I am informed, that the gentlemen held their meeting this morning. Will you speak?"

"Monsieur le Chevalier," stammered Daine, flushing and paling by turns, "we are—we can not—we do not—in short, we came to beg you to surrender the town."

"Ah!" said the governor, "and why should I

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give up a charge devolved upon me by his Majesty the King?"

"We are starving, monsieur," answered Daine more boldly; "our dwellings, our shops, our warehouses are ruined. We can do no more. If the English break into the town, if they storm the walls, we have over two thousand women and children here. Think of them, sir!"

"True," said de Ramesay, "but so long as we have arms in our hands the English will not break through the walls. Is it not so, gentlemen?"

"*Vive la nouvelle France!*"

"Let us die for the flag!"

"*Vive le roi!*"

"Death to the English!" broke in confused acclamations from the little group of officers behind the chevalier. The others were silent.

"How is it that I hear no response to my appeal from the officers of the militia?" continued the governor. "Gentlemen, do you allow your brothers of the regular army to outdo you in patriotism?"

"By God, sir!" ripped out one of the leading officers of the militia, "we can not fight any more, and there's an end to it! Our men are deserting by hundreds, and we are hungry! We have had nothing to eat since last night, nothing to drink either! 'Tis ill keeping guard and fighting on nothing! The English are there in thousands, curse them! We can not keep them out. My men won't fight any longer!"

"Nor mine!"

"Nor mine!" rang through the hall.

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“ And you, monsieur, has your stomach for fight also left you? ” asked de Ramesay, frowning upon the man.

“ Yes, it has! ” snapped out the officer furiously.

“ ’Tis a hopeless contest, the city is lost! ”

“ Yes, yes, he is right! ”

“ Surrender! ”

“ Give up the town! ”

“ We are lost! ” cried one after another.

There was no doubt either of their unanimity or of their determination.

“ You cowards! ” exclaimed the governor bitterly, turning upon them with a withering glance of contempt. His calmness gone, he stamped his foot in passionate scorn and anger.

It was de Vitré who broke the silence which followed this insulting charge. He sprang from the side of the governor in fierce passion, seized the big militiaman by the shoulder, twice struck him violently with the flat of his sword, and then with a furious shove sent him reeling back among his astonished and indignant companions.

A fierce roar of rage was blasted up from the excited militiamen. They surged toward de Vitré, who faced them undaunted, his blade out now. Swords and espontons were lifted in the air, pistols handled, fists shaken, and curses and yells filled the room.

“ Back! ” cried the governor sternly. “ I am astonished at you, Monsieur de Vitré—this brawling can not be tolerated under the circumstances! A divided house we are and indeed defenceless.—

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And you, messieurs," he continued, turning to the volunteers, "you seem to have spirit enough to fight among yourselves. Gentlemen, it is not possible that you are all agreed with the major who has just spoken?"

The restraint was off the mob now, the ice was broken. They crowded about the old general with oaths and protestations, demanding that he surrender the town. Presently the merchants and business men joined in. Words were passed back and forth, and the whole assemblage broke out in the most violent disorder. The room was filled with clamour.

In the midst of the confusion, which well indicated the disorganization in the town, an officer burst into the hall and shouldered his way through the struggling mob toward the governor. The crowd became silent as they recognised his presence and instinctively felt that he had news of importance. His face was grave with anxiety.

"Monsieur," he cried, saluting, "the English are about to storm the St. Charles Gate! Monsieur le Gardeur, who commands there, has sent me to say that the town troops have thrown down their arms and have refused to fight! He has no force to stay the advance. For God's sake, send re-enforcements, or we are lost!"

Even as he spoke another officer came running into the room from the walls on the other side.

"Monsieur le Gouverneur," he cried, as he entered the apartment, "the colonial troops have withdrawn from the walls! Captain Le Moyne says

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that the English battalions are mustering for an immediate attack. He has not enough regulars to man the guns! He must have re-enforcements immediately, and the men are hungry!"

"Is there an ounce of bread left," asked the governor, turning to the quarter-master, "to feed the soldiers who are faithful and these cattle?"

"Nothing, sir," answered that functionary sadly, "the last ration was issued last night."

"You see, sir," cried the merchant, "to what straits we are reduced! My children cry for bread!"

"My wife suffers with hunger; we are ruined!" cried another.

"My soldiers starve!" exclaimed a third.

"Gentlemen," said the unfortunate chevalier, turning to the militia, "you have some influence with your men surely! Return to them, beg them to fight one more day! Monsieur de Lévis will surely succour us. Upon us depends the fortune of New France. When we strike the flag we give up a province, an empire! For God's sake, messieurs, for the King, for your own lands, once more to the walls! *Vive la nouvelle France!*"

The militia officers stood in gloomy silence in the face of this appeal. The feeble acclamations of the loyal officers of the line were drowned by a dreadful crashing sound, followed by a detonating explosion, which hurled the people in the room in every direction. A shell from the batteries burst in the hall.

"*Sauve qui peut!*" cried one in the smoke.

"We have no safety anywhere!"

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“Strike the flag!”

“Fly, fly, messieurs!”

The room was filled with men, dead, wounded, and stunned. Groans, curses, shrieks resounded. Scarcely knowing what had happened, the governor, de Vitré, and the rest, blinded, dazed, and choking, found themselves swept out of the château to the terrace in front of it overlooking the river. From the tall staff above them floated the white flag of France. There was an excited group of men around it. Two or three eager hands clutched at the halliards. Slowly, as if with reluctance, the proud banner came drooping down to the earth.

De Vitré, Rouvigny, Joännès, Fiédmont, and two or three others with drawn swords ran into the midst of the mob, driving back the townspeople and the officers. With eager hands they strove to hoist the flag, but the halliards had been cut and they could only lift it in their hands a little space above the sodden ground. As they realized the effort, their antagonists swept down upon them again. The governor's spirit was unabated, but his resolution at this gave way. He succumbed to the inevitable.

“Let be!” he cried, breaking his sword and throwing the pieces far from him, “the flag is down. Be it remembered that it was not my hand that struck it! You cowards, you have your way! It is the end of New France.”

He stood, with the tears trickling down his rugged old face, a picture of shame and sorrow.

One by one the big guns that ringed the city

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ceased to pour their shot upon the town, as the English saw the flag come down. Although the heavy smoke still hung low in the sodden air, a silence ominous and gloomy for the Frenchmen succeeded the roar of the cannonade. The ships in the harbour were soon black with men. From the meadows on the Plains of Abraham the sound of cheering could be heard faintly, and down by the St. Charles Gate, where the columns of the English were massed, came back an echo of the joyful sound. It was the death-knell of the province.

Major Joännès, reluctantly complying, while bitterly protesting, was despatched with a white flag to General Townshend's headquarters. With the cessation of the bombardment the townspeople, regardless of the rain, poured into the streets. The plateau in front of the château was soon filled with people shouting, gesticulating, laughing, crying, sobbing like mad. The grim old governor, with the officers about him, stood at the foot of the flagstaff looking over that marvelous prospect which should never again belong to France. Presently Joännès returned.

"The terms, major?" cried the governor.

"The garrison to march out with the honours of war, with their arms, two pieces of cannon, and twenty rounds; afterward to be transported to France with such of the townspeople as choose to go with them. The free exercise of our religion permitted and the rights and property of the people respected."

"And the alternative, monsieur?"

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“ Immediate attack.”

“ Have you the paper? ”

“ Within my breast, sir,” answered Joännès.

“ Let us go to the château; we will sign it.”

Presently the two reappeared on the terrace.

“ Say to the English that the people are starving, and ask them in the name of the women and children to send us something to eat at once,” said the governor.

Joännès saluted, turned away, and was gone. The people watched him disappear in silence.

Shots were heard outside the walls a few moments after he had left. There was a sudden clatter of horses in the Rue St. Louis. A squadron of cavalry dashed helter-skelter through the crowd, which gave way at their approach, and the leader sprang to the ground before the governor.

“ A message from Monsieur de Lévis! ” he cried, saluting. “ He will attack the English to-morrow! Meanwhile he sends you these,” pointing to his own horse, upon which before and behind the saddle lay a heavy bag of meal. “ All my men are similarly provided, monsieur. One more day and you are rescued! Here are food and re-enforcements. We cut through the English lines and made the gate. Some poor fellows, alas! dropped on the way. Be of good heart, Monsieur le Gouverneur, salvation is at hand! *Vive la nouvelle France!* ”

He was a bold fellow who uttered these words, and the fickle townspeople, catching the glorious information, sent up cheer after cheer. The temper of the militia seemed to have changed. Led by their

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sometime recalcitrant officers, they now clamoured to be sent to the walls.

“Too late, monsieur!” said de Ramesay bitterly, surveying with gloomy contempt the changing scene, “you have waited too long. I have surrendered the town. These false, fickle cowards refused to fight. They deserted the walls. The English were marching to storm the place. With one hundred and fifty faithful soldiers and these few gentlemen I could do nothing. There were women and children to be thought of. Too late, sir! Return to Monsieur de Lévis—I will provide you with a flag—and tell him that all is over in Quebec!”

CHAPTER XIX

THE PLAY, THE STAKE, AND THE PLAYERS

MEANWHILE, what of the Countess Anne and Captain Grafton? They had passed through a week of such mingled emotions, such alternations of joy and sorrow, of love and jealousy, of remembrances and anticipation, as could scarcely be described.

When the woman he loved left him alone the night he recognised her, after that rapturous exchange of kisses, Grafton felt himself transported to heaven. He forgot, in the happiness consequent upon his discovery of her identity, the racial antagonisms which should lie between them; he forgot the great gulf of war which held them asunder; he even forgot the engagement of Anne to de Vitré. But the next morning, when the first glow of his passion had left him, he was enabled to view things in a clearer light.

He carefully took account of the different obstacles which separated, or might tend to separate, him from the woman he loved. He intended to win her, come what might, and as the campaign was like to prove a difficult one, in which the odds were mainly against him, it behooved him to take

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stock of all opposition and carefully look over the field. He must think, he must plan, he must leave no stone unturned, lose no point in the game.

First of all he was an American, and that was different from being an Englishman. Anne, although she showed little of it to a casual inspection, was an American as well. That was a point gained. The war, he believed, would presently be over. That was another point in his favour. If she loved him—if she loved him! Who could doubt it after last night? Indeed, God had created them for each other. But did she love him enough to brave the anger and defy the opposition of her grandfather? Did she love him enough to marry him in despite of country, nationality, public opinion? He thought so.

She had great pride of race, and from the French point of view she would be condescending ineffably in marrying a mere commoner. For the matter of that, he thought, in his loving humility, that no man was fit to possess this priceless jewel of womanhood. He placed her upon a level so high that she would have been compelled to condescend to marry even a king, much less a simple American gentleman. Marriage with him meant for her the renunciation of title, rank, station, possessions, country, family, friends, traditions—he piled up the catalogue of sacrifices involved, in gloomy, ever-deepening humility. Still, other women had done such things; these were not insuperable obstacles.

The last difficulty was the greatest. There was *de Vitré*—a stumbling-block indeed. No man

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could have done more for another than he had done for the young Frenchman. He had twice saved his life, he had established his honour, and, by a singularly ironic trick of fate, he feared he had been the means of bestowing upon him the hand of the woman they both loved.

His own sense of the obligation he had conferred upon that young Frenchman lay heavily upon his soul. He could not demand from him freely or even take from him by force what he would have wrested cheerfully from another. A benefit conferred, however it may be considered by the recipient as a benefit forgot, invariably establishes a sense of obligation on him who confers it. Therefore, de Vitré was an obstacle of the most serious moment to the future progress of his happiness. How to contend with him he knew not. Certainly he could not make the relinquishment of the Frenchman's desire for Anne the price, or the reward, of his own past services. A genuine man, he could not even bear to have these services mentioned; and that they so persistently remained in his thoughts gave him honourable uneasiness. A very exalted and chivalric nature had Philip Grafton. He was particularly nice on the point of honour.

That was not all either, for connected with de Vitré was the honour of the de Rohans. Anne, in the most public manner and of her own free will, had betrothed herself to the young Frenchman. She had voluntarily entered upon the relationship and assumed the obligation. Her sense of honour was not less keen than his. She was a wom-

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an, he remembered, imbued with all the traditions of that race whose proud boast it was that while they had not been born to the kingly degree and they would not condescend to the princely rank, yet they were Rohans. Was Anne capable of sacrificing her word for her love? It was doubtful.

The last consideration that arose in his mind was an acute conjecture that the marquis would not be much better satisfied with de Vitré for a suitor for his grand-daughter than he would have been with Grafton. The old man probably, nay, certainly, had formed his own plans, and there was without doubt a third suitor of his personal choosing awaiting Anne in France. This meant much. If Grafton could succeed in matching the marquis' determination against Anne's will power, between de Vitré and the other, he might the more easily achieve success.

He realized all these things, weighed them carefully, considered them exhaustively, and racked his brain in an endeavour to solve the problem. His resolute determination was unabated. That, his love for her, and her feeling for him, were the three things he counted upon to enable him to have his way and win her for his own. He was no longer a boy; he did not approach the problem lightly and carelessly, but with a deliberate calmness which outwardly belied his passion. He was a man thoughtful by nature and strengthened in character by the responsibilities of his position as the captain of a ship, and he deliberately determined to win the

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person, as he already possessed the heart of the French girl.

It was a sort of game he played, with her for the stake. The grim old marquis, with his pride of race, family, and nation, and his ardent patriotism; the handsome, dashing young Canadian, the unknown suitor, who was sure to be a man of parts and condition, and the stubborn, determined little Englishman would all prove famous players. Which would win? Well, come what might, Grafton already had Anne's heart, de Vitré her promise, the marquis her duty, and the unknown as yet, nothing. The heart was the strongest card, he decided.

Of her love he felt no doubt; but love and marriage were two things that rarely went together in the mind of the high nobility of France in those days. But stay! Anne was different. As a child, when he had known her best, she had known none of these disagreeable conveniences of the society of her day. Had her sojourn in Canada, her entrance into the gay little world of New France, effected a revolution in her character? He did not believe so.

These were torturing questions all. Evening found him still thinking of them and thinking alone. His wants had been attended to by Josette or Jean-Rénaud, now allowed free access to him. His anxious inquiries for the countess had been met by the statement that she was ill and could not come to see him—a declaration which added alarm to his longing and disappointment. His progress toward recovery had been rapid, but on the second day of her continued absence from his room he nearly fretted

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himself into a fever. He found that he could be more calm and cool in theory than in practice. Dr. Arnoux looked very grave when he paid his afternoon visit that day, and, ignorant of the real situation, spoke some blunt words to mademoiselle.

“This Englishman,” he said, “is pining, worrying, fretting. Unless something can be done to restore his peace of mind I fear the consequences may be serious; inflammation may set in in his feverish condition, and then——”

His ominous gesture frightened her greatly.

“Can’t you, mademoiselle, cheer him up, distract his mind in some way?” he asked.

Anne knew only too well what ailed her patient. She had distracted him too much already, possibly; yet, when she heard of the threatened danger, with her usual impetuosity she threw prudence to the winds, broke her promise to herself, and fled to the chamber. He heard her fleet step on the stair, and when she entered he faced her from the pillow with such a smile of hope and joy as completely transformed him.

“Anne! Anne!” he murmured reproachfully, “for two whole days I have lain here alone thinking, thinking, thinking, dreaming, loving, until I wonder I did not go mad! And you never came!”

“I sent Josette, monsieur.”

“Josette! You might have sent every woman, every messenger in the world, and I would have thought only of you! How could you be so cruel? You love me, yet you left me!”

“How can I love the enemy of France, mon-

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sieur?" she answered, gazing down upon him with eyes that gave the lie to the cold words on her lips.

"I know not how you can, but you can not deny that you do. Anne, sweet Anne, you are half American. This land is the home of your mother. Let it be the home of your heart as well!"

"And my grandfather, the marquis? He would never consent."

"Faith, your own consent is all that is necessary, sweetheart. If you love me enough——"

"But I am betrothed to Monsieur de Vitré."

"Why did you do it at the last moment, after you had recognised me, when fate—happy fate—threw me at your feet?"

"I—I——"

"You do not love him, Anne, dearest? Come, the truth! The de Rohans were ever true, you told me."

"Ah, monsieur, I respect and admire Monsieur de Vitré. He is a brave and noble gentleman."

"Yes, but you do not love him?"

"How dare you catechize me in this manner?" she cried piteously, shrinking from his persistent questioning. "I will withdraw, sir. What warrant have you——"

But she made no motion to leave the apartment. On the contrary, he saw her body sway uneasily toward him. She could not control her feelings. If he had not been so ill, so weak, so pathetically helpless, he would have appealed less strongly to her, she might have resisted better. She was angry at herself for her lack of control, and bitterly morti-

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fied. Was this man her master in truth? And he wore another woman's picture! Shame on her, shame! Could he compel her to break her word, defy everything, and marry him against her will? Ah, but was it against her will? There was the rub.

She stood helpless before him. The whole current of her being flowing toward him, only her stubborn will and pride holding her back. But the struggle could not be maintained for long. He marked the rise and fall of her breast. Her fingers moved restlessly, her knees trembled, her eyes swam; her colour came and went. The constraint she was under was terrible.

The girl loved him with all her soul. Yet she struggled on; she would not yield. 'Twas an unequal combat. She fought two: his will and her love. The end was certain. He felt it was almost cruel as he watched her and knew it would come. All she needed in that moment to bring her to him was time. He was wise enough not to be hasty. He put equal constraint upon himself; indeed, his love was no less than her own.

"I have only the warrant of my love for you to plead my cause," he answered at last.

"Have you loved me all the time?" she cried, coming a step nearer.

"I know not," he answered honestly before her truth-compelling gaze, "but at least I have loved no one else, and since the night in the tower there has not been a day in which I have not thought of you. But never in my wildest visions did you appear so beautiful as you are to-day, Anne, sweet

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Anne! Dear Little France! My heart knew you, even though my false eyes told no story to my bewildered mind. 'Twas God that brought us together again. We can not be separated, my sweet, my own!"

"But Monsieur de Vitré, my engagement——"

"I ask you again why it was you entered upon it so suddenly?"

"I saw that locket you wear over your heart, Sir Philip, whose secret you guard so jealously, from which you will not be parted. You did not know me. You had forgotten me. There was some one else," she murmured. "I can not marry the enemy of my country. I should be an outcast, despised. You fainted in the hall of the château. Monsieur de Vitré was there. When I knelt beside you I—I—looked at you, monsieur. I forgot myself—a little. I betrayed myself unsought—unknown even. Monsieur de Vitré cried out before them all that I loved you. The thought stung me—my pride, you know. I could not bear it. There was but one way. He had besought me for my hand. I dared not trust myself before you unpledged. They looked at me so earnestly. It was a foretaste of what I should meet. I stopped every gossiping tongue, stifled every suspicion by saying 'Yes' to my brave countryman. I—I do not regret it."

She forced herself to lift her head and look at him white-faced and trembling. His bold, burning glances plunged through her defences like a sword-blade.

"This from the truthful de Rohan!" he mur-

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mured coldly, but with a breaking heart. "If you looked at me dying then—and perhaps dying now after that word—if you looked at me then as you look at me this moment, there were no ground for de Vitré's suspicion. Is this your fidelity! Go! You have not—you do not love me."

She buried her face in her hands beneath his stern accusing gaze—his reproaches seared her heart. She had not told the truth to him.

"Go, mademoiselle!" he continued pitilessly, ruthlessly turning the weapon he had thrust into her heart. "The other night—does my imagination mock me, or did I dream of heaven, of your kisses? Were the lips that now betray those that met my own? Was it that sweet head that lay upon my breast? Was it all a vision? Did I ever live for an hour with you in that old dark tower by the sea? Was I indeed the knight of that gentle child who wrapped herself around my heart? You weep, mademoiselle. Why? Happiness opens before you. You are the betrothed of de Vitré——"

"No more!" she cried, tearing her hands from her face and springing toward him. She seized his arm and unwounded shoulder with a grasp that was painful in its intensity. "No more! No more! You torture me beyond endurance! 'Tis no dream. I love you, I adore you, my king, my king! What are country, and grandfather, and friends, and all the world to me beside you!"

She bent her glorious head once more and kissed him as she had kissed him in the moonlight two nights before. Had he won? This time he did not

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lose control of himself. She was living that moment in the present, he could still, while sharing her emotion, think of the future. He would strike at once.

“But de Vitré?” he exclaimed.

She drew herself away from him slowly, rose tremblingly to her feet, and looked down upon him again.

“You remind me,” she said brokenly, “of my word, my duty. I know not how it is,” she continued, “why I am so weak before you. Is it the strength of your love or the strength of mine? But I will be mistress of myself. I can not break my word. I can not break my old grandfather’s heart. I can not dishonour the name of my family. I am a de Rohan though but a woman. I will not——”

“Hear me, Anne!” cried Grafton, stretching out his hand to heaven, “before God I swear you shall! You shall break your word with de Vitré! You shall put aside your country! You shall cross the will of your people! You are mine by prior right. I will make you do it! You shall be my wife!”

“How, monsieur, will you bring about these things?” she cried boldly, every nerve in her body thrilling and quivering in passionate response to the imperious affection in his words. “What power have you? What is it that will give you strength?”

“The power of love, Anne!” answered Philip. “When two love each other as we love nothing can come between them.”

She looked long and earnestly at him. He spoke the truth, and she knew it, yet with the stub-

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bornness of a man and the devotion of a woman she clung to her negation. Presently, as he said nothing further, she turned to leave the room.

“Wait!” he cried from where he lay exhausted by his own feelings. “Before you go, promise me that you will come again? That each day you will let me see you at least once?”

“I promise you, Sir Philip,” she answered, “but I must have no more of this. Indeed, I can not stand it. ’Tis not right, it comports not with my honour. You must promise me, too. I am pledged still to Monsieur de Vitré.”

She was almost humble in her petition, as if to say, “You have the power, you know it, oh, abuse it not, if you indeed love the woman who has given you her heart.” Her appeal met with an immediate and generous response from him.

“God bless you, Anne, for the saving grace of that word ‘still’!” he cried. “I promise you. I shall ask no kiss of you, expect no caress from you, beg no further word of love, until your engagement with de Vitré is broken.”

“That will never be, monsieur,” she said sadly, yet taking heart and cherishing hope from his bold assurance. “Au revoir.”

With reluctant feet the girl turned and left the chamber. She sank down before the prie-dieu in the room which she had occupied since Grafton came, and poured out her soul to the Mother of Sorrows in appeals for pity and help. He loved her, O Blessed Virgin, and she loved him. How masterful he was! He had sworn she would be his wife.

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His wife, yet, pitying Heaven, that other woman whose face he wore over his heart! She tore the lace at her breast in wild and jealous pain at the thought. Was it possible for a girl to be at the same time so happy and miserable?

Poor Denis de Vitré!

CHAPTER XX

ANNE DE ROHAN SAYS—FAREWELL!

GRAFTON saw Anne de Rohan daily after that. She kept her promise, and, touched by her dependence, he did the same. Yet not without a struggle, for the effort told on each of them. She had ventured into his room timorously the next day, but as he allowed his love to express itself only through the medium of his eyes, which drank in her beauty as the field the rain, she had become somewhat reassured, and had not hesitated to come to his chamber more frequently.

It was lucky for him that her relative had died before he fell at her door, and it was also fortunate that, unconsciously, the frank freedom of Anne's American blood permitted her to do things to which, as a French girl, she could never have consented. She was thoroughly French in her emotions and quite American in her instincts—a delightful combination indeed.

The two found much to talk about. The history of the years intervening between their parting and meeting, which had been crowded with incidents and adventures for both of them, was gone over with minute care. It seemed to Philip that

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every petty or trifling incident in which she had borne a part was of priceless value to him, and Anne hung with equal interest and equal craving to know all the life of the man she loved, upon every detail of the varied experiences with which the life of a sailor of that period teemed. The strange series of events which had brought the two who had parted in Brittany, together again in Canada, could not be sufficiently dwelt upon, nor the marvellous coincidence of that meeting too strongly emphasized.

Anne found Philip all that she had dreamed him, too. He had grown in dignity and in solid learning, and she discovered the instinctive respect she had felt for him as a child, and which had been the precursor of her love for him, rested upon a sound basis of ability and culture. For his part he marvelled at the acuteness of her intellect, the poetic charm of her fancy, and the purity of her soul, as she unfolded it before him by her frank yet artless conversation.

In all this they neither of them touched upon the subject which was uppermost in their hearts. They looked love, they thought love, they lived love, but they did not speak it; yet the most casual observer could have seen it in every gesture, in every intonation, in every phrase, in every glance.

Jean-Rénaud and Josette, who watched over their young mistress faithfully and devotedly, easily detected the situation with feelings of pain and anxiety. Josette, who had grown more and more the confidante of her mistress, ventured to bring again

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and again the marquis and de Vitré to the countess' attention.

De Vitré was a subject Anne consistently avoided. Her intentions toward him were unchanged; she fully expected, with the consent of the marquis, to carry out the engagement which she had entered upon so impulsively and yet not without reason. For the present, however, she dismissed him from her consideration and gathered what enjoyment she could out of the fleeting moments. She would have enough of him in the future, only the day was her own.

Not so with Grafton. De Vitré, after Anne, completely filled his thoughts. What to do about that young man he scarcely knew. His intention, however, was as strong as ever. Indeed, the more he saw of Anne the more intense his passion grew and the more resolute his determination to break the engagement with de Vitré became, but he could think of no practicable plan.

The favours he had bestowed upon that young man, the obligations under which he had laid him, seemed to Grafton's nice sense of honour to preclude speaking to him upon the subject. Were it any other man in France or Canada he would not have hesitated to tell his story, announce his determination, and win the maiden if necessary by force of arms; but he could not do this with de Vitré. He could exact no reward for benefits conferred. He could do nothing to him at present at any rate. A life saved, a character rehabilitated, stood in the way. It was a perplexing problem, to which no so-

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lution could be thought out, though he bent to the consideration of it all the genius and intellect of which he was possessed.

Meanwhile, under the skilled nursing he received, aided by a sound and vigorous constitution, he made rapid progress toward recovery from his wounds. The first time he sat up in his chamber Anne happened to be with him. Jean-Rénaud had dressed him and assisted him to a capacious chair which was placed near the window and from which he had a clear view of the street. The little family, by Anne's orders, had kept close at home, and the tremendous events which had culminated in the surrender of the town were as yet unknown to them.

The rain, which had been drearily pouring down for a day or two, had cleared away, and the September sun was shining brilliantly outside. The day was mild, the air balmy, and Philip sat at the open window drinking in the freshness of the morning. He looked handsomer than ever to the girl who stood by his side. The unusual pallor of his illness had been modified and a faint flush of colour upon his pale cheek told of returning health.

There was a blowing of bugles, a rattling of drums, the sound of martial music heard in the street. They listened. It grew louder. Troops were approaching.

"Those are not French drums," said Grafton. "Hark! 'Tis an English roll! They are playing The British Grenadiers! What has happened?"

He leaned forward anxiously, but Anne checked

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his motion to rise, and thrust her head out of the window.

“Soldiers are approaching,” she said.

“Yes,” he cried. “Their uniforms?”

“They wear red coats and shining caps. They are English. They are coming nearer. You can see them in a moment. What can it be?”

“’Tis a surrender!” cried Philip exultingly.

“Alas! yes, it must be so,” answered the girl, turning toward him.

“Forgive my inconsiderate triumph, Anne,” he answered softly, seizing her hand and carrying it to his lips.

She covered her face with her other hand and the tears trickled silently down her cheeks, while the advance guard of the British Grenadiers coming to take possession, marched gaily by amid the silence of the people looking gloomily on.

There was a step outside on the stair. De Vitré, pale and haggard, entered the room.

“Monsieur de Vitré!” cried the girl, surprised and disquieted. “What means this unceremonious entrance?”

“Mademoiselle Anne,” answered the Frenchman, bowing profoundly, “forgive my haste, the city has surrendered. The English troops are approaching. I came to protect you, fearful lest——”

“The English soldiers war not upon women, Monsieur de Vitré,” interrupted Grafton sharply, leaning forward, his face full of colour at the presence of his rival. “Besides, I am here.”

“But you are ill, sir, and while I respect the Eng-

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lish soldiers, there are always evil-minded persons in the wake of an army, and surrender brings out all the vicious elements in our own population. I love Mademoiselle de Rohan, as you know. She is betrothed to me. I am but this moment released by the governor. Naturally I came to her."

"And you are right, Monsieur de Vitré. I doubt not I shall need your protection," said Anne, determined at last that all should be ended now.

"Mademoiselle, you honour me," cried the delighted Frenchman. "I hope to deserve your confidence now and always."

In spite of his jealous anguish, Philip could not refuse to accord his rival a meed of praise. He was a tall, handsome, gallant-looking sailor, whose every movement was full of grace. There was no doubt as to the depth of his affection for Anne de Rohan either. A hard task indeed was before Master Philip Grafton.

"Oh, Mademoiselle," continued de Vitré, stepping nearer her and seizing her hand, "you made me so happy by what you said in the château. I have chafed in my restraint, wondering if it were true, fearful that I have dreamed it. For what had I done to deserve it?"

"Monsieur," said Anne quickly, catching sight of Grafton's clinched hands and convulsed face, which nothing but his own passion kept from the observation of the Frenchman, "Monsieur, I seize the first opportunity to say what I had scarcely time to explain, or what you probably did not comprehend, when I bestowed upon you my hand. I have

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given my promise to you, and that promise I mean to keep, but, monsieur, there is another who must be consulted. The Marquis de Chabot, my grandfather; the ultimate disposal of my hand and fortune rests with him. Before the engagement is ratified or—in short, monsieur, I beg you to treat me as your friend, until you have gained the consent of the head of my house to this marriage.”

A load that had crushed Philip to the earth was lifted from his heart as he heard these words. It was a respite she was giving him. At least he would not have the torture of the thought that the lips which had melted upon his own should quiver, however reluctantly, under the touch of de Vitré—not yet.

Time, only give him time. He would find a way to take her, even if he had to snatch her from the very heart of France, from the steps of the throne, even. He breathed again as he listened.

“At least,” murmured de Vitré, who was visibly disconcerted by this deliberate statement from the woman he loved, “at least say that you love me.”

Philip’s heart stood still for a moment; but the girl was equal to the situation.

“Monsieur,” she answered, “I did not say that in the hall, I can not say it now. I respect you, I esteem you.”

“Is there any other one?” he cried jealously.

“Monsieur de Vitré, there is no gentleman of France who stands higher in my regard than you do; let that suffice you, sir.”

Whether he noticed the equivocation or not she

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could not tell, for she gave him no opportunity to interrogate her further. "You must press me no more, monsieur," she added, "I have said enough."

"Good God, de Vitré!" exclaimed Grafton impatiently at this moment. "Aren't you satisfied with what you have, man? Half of New France is filled with envy and would fain stand in your shoes, I warrant you."

"Monsieur Grafton," cried de Vitré haughtily at this unheard-of interruption, "by what right do you presume—but stop—I forgot myself. You have every right. Say what you will, captain. I can not forget that I owe you life, liberty, and love! I can never repay you, but upon the honour of a Canadian, a Frenchman, you can ask nothing of me that I will not grant."

The truth that was behind the grateful words sealed Grafton's lips. For the moment he almost wished he had not interfered to save his rival's life—but he instantly put the thought away as unworthy a gentleman.

"'Tis nothing," he murmured, "you would have done as much for me, for any man. You put too much value——"

"Mademoiselle Anne," cried Josette, entering the room in great agitation, "a messenger from Monsieur de Ramesay!"

Anne took the paper and tore it open.

"A summons, gentlemen!" she said, "the governor requires me and my servants to attend him at once at the Château St. Louis. He thinks we will be safer with him. He knows of your pres-

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ence, Monsieur de Vitré, for he says you will escort us.”

Anne was glad to have the scene over. The emotions of the last few moments had been almost too much for her. As Josette brought her hat and wrap she turned to Grafton, extending her hand.

“Farewell, monsieur!” she said.

“’Tis not good-bye, Mademoiselle de Rohan!” cried Grafton, seizing her hand, “I shall see you again!”

“I shall always be glad to see you, monsieur,” she answered simply, biting her lip to control its quivering. “Come, Monsieur de Vitré.”

“My friend,” said de Vitré, ere he followed her from the room, “have no anxiety. I will see that some one comes to you at once.”

“But Mademoiselle de Rohan?” cried Grafton.

“I will take care of her, monsieur,” returned the Frenchman meaningly. “Remember, ’tis my right.”

In one sense de Vitré was as good as his word, for the room was soon filled with English officers, who welcomed Grafton as one risen from the dead. They had given him over for lost at last, not having heard from him, and he had the pleasure later on of reading his own obituary in the general orders commending his conduct on the debarkation of the troops, which had been published by the vice-admiral.

Several days passed without his seeing or hearing anything from Anne de Rohan in spite of his inquiries, days filled with the most consuming anx-

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iety. Yet he had endeavoured to be patient, having set himself resolutely to get well, and had made much progress in recovering from his wounds. He realized that he could not afford to lose any time in the fight for Anne. On the fourth day a note was put into his hand:

“ Philip, my Philip,” it read, “ my knight, my love, I am calling you so for the last time. When you read this I shall be far down the river on board a ship for France. With the first of the refugees I was permitted to go, and—forgive me, my own—I could not trust myself to see you again. I will not deny—indeed, how can I?—that I have loved you with a love that more than matches your own. Yet you wear one woman’s picture over your heart, dear, and I humiliate myself by sending you this counterfeit presentment of another. Alas, ’tis all of me that you may ever have! Look upon it, monsieur, as you have loved me in spite of the other and then break it, and—forget me. Farewell!

“ ANNE.”

In a little diamond-studded, heart-shaped locket, which he had often seen on her breast, there was a cunning miniature of the woman he loved. He pressed it to his lips and then slipped it and the letter in a pocket near his heart. Then, with the assistance of the English sailor who had been detailed to wait upon him, he made ready to leave.

He looked long and earnestly about the room, hallowed by their meeting, filled with blessed asso-

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ciations of her presence, ere he crossed the threshold, for he did not intend to return.

He was informed by General Townshend, then in the patched-up Château St. Louis, when he reported to him, that three days since, the first shipload of fugitives who had chosen to leave Canada rather than remain under the rule of the English, had departed. Among them was Mademoiselle de Rohan and her servants.

“Who commanded the cartel?” asked Grafton.

“A Canadian officer, who was to be exchanged in Europe.”

“And his name, General Townshend?”

“Lieutenant Denis de Vitré, he is called, I believe,” answered the young English general, looking curiously at him. “By the way, I have a paper for you. You are gazetted to the command of the frigate Maidstone, and you are to carry despatches to Sir Edward Hawke. Vice-Admiral Saunders also recommends you to be given command of the first ship of the line vacant, for your distinguished services here. I congratulate you, captain,” added the general, handing him the paper.

“When does the Maidstone sail, sir?”

“As soon as you are able to take her, I believe. She has been provisioned for her voyage and lies in the basin. She will be the first of the English ships to get to sea. Another fast frigate will be sent to Europe with despatches, but Admiral Saunders thinks it is of the utmost importance that Hawke, who is blockading Brest, as you know, should be informed of the fall of Quebec; and you are to tell

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him that Saunders will join him at the earliest possible date, and with the combined fleets they may have a chance to crush the French under Conflans. I suppose you will start in a day or two?"

"I start now, at once, general."

"But your wound?"

"'Tis nothing any longer. A breath of sea air will set me up again. By the way, where was the cartel, commanded by Monsieur de Vitré, bound for?"

"For Brest. He is to be exchanged there and the refugees landed."

"Ah! And his ship, general? Was it a speedy one, do you know?"

"'Tis said he selected the speediest Frenchman in the basin."

"And the Maidstone—do you know anything of her qualities?"

"The vice-admiral told me that he had chosen the fastest ship in the fleet for you, so you may have a chance of overhauling her, if you care to, although they have three days' start. Well, I wish you *bon voyage*, captain. You will, of course, report to Vice-Admiral Saunders before you leave. Good-bye."

"I wonder what he's up to?" thought the general, as Grafton saluted, turned on his heel, and hurriedly left the room.

BOOK V

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE TOWER

CHAPTER XXI

WET SHEETS AND FLOWING SEAS

A GRAY sky and an angry sea.

A solitary ship in the waste of waters, staggering along in a roaring gale from the west; every rag of canvas that could safely be spread—ay, and even more—urging her forward before the fierce wind; driving her madly through the tossing waves. A lonely, restless man upon her deck passing the long weary hours on the forecastle looking eagerly ahead, ever ahead; turning like a devotee his face to the east, pointing his vessel toward the rising sun; though driven aside by the happenings of the sea, returning to his goal with the accuracy and the persistency with which the polar needle swings toward its star.

A sailor watching with eagle glance every weather indication, crowding the canvas on the ship until the masts groaned and shivered like mountain-prisoned Titans under the tremendous pressure; the iron-taut braces and stays, the nerves of the ship, trembled like smitten harp-strings under the mighty pull of the mad tempests of bleak November. Neg-

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lecting no seamanlike precaution, losing no point of advantage, the little ship was driven on, for if skill were at the helm love fledged before the prow.

Such the picture! And its complement?

Some two hundred leagues ahead of the frigate, with the man on the knightheads peering fruitlessly across the dark expanse of tossing water, another vessel, driven in like manner, steadily pursued its course for the same destination. As if conscious of the unwearied, indomitable pursuit, she, too, made her way onward madly, recklessly, crossing the great deep.

Skill and seamanship of the highest type were at her service as well. A willingness to drive was there in almost as great a measure, for this ship was homeward bound. When she dropped anchor in the waters of France, those aboard of her, now held prisoner by the heavy-linked chain of honour, would be free.

And a woman hung over the quarter of the second ship listening indifferently to words of sweetness, responding not at all to passionate pleadings that fell upon her ear; a woman, turning her eyes back toward the west, gazing upon the setting sun that had carried down to darkness with it her maiden heart; a woman marking the long white wake of the ship, her sadness growing greater, her regret deepening, deepening with each swiftly passing league.

And yet the lonely woman on the quarter-deck with the infrequent sunlight losing itself in her midnight hair, with her violet eyes staring backward,

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backward, backward, from out a pale face whose whiteness matched the foaming wave, was drawing on as surely and irresistibly as the loadstone the needle, the eager man upon the other ship.

“ I think there can be no doubt of our observations, captain. You see we have had a double check on them by working them out independently.”

“ Yes, we have made no mistake, I am sure, and yet there are always happenings for which allowance must be made; things that no mind, no instrument, can check on the sea.”

“ True, sir; but it has all been plain sailing so far, and the way you have watched and handled this frigate has been a marvel to me, and I have sailed in many ships.”

“ Thank you. But I have an object in it all.”

“ Of course, the despatches to Sir Edward Hawke——”

“ Yes, that of course. Do you know, Hatfield, I haven't told you before, and it isn't a thing that a man likes to talk about, any way, but I've got to tell you now, I suppose. Well, the fact is—that cartel, you know, the one I've been trying to overhaul? There is a—lady—a Frenchwoman on board of her—and—you see—I met her five years ago when a prisoner in France and again in Canada—and——”

“ I see, sir,” answered Hatfield wisely, filling in his superior's lame and halting conclusion by the aid of his own imagination, “ and you would see her again? I quite understand.”

Grafton, whose face had flushed deeply while

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he made his executive officer the recipient of these strange confidences, was greatly relieved at his ready comprehension.

“Yes, that’s it,” he answered, grateful for his lieutenant’s tact. “And I mean to see her once more, by Heaven, if I have to go into Brest to do it!”

“All right, sir, I’m with you in anything. And if I know our bullies forward, they’d like nothing better than a dash at a Frenchman, for a ship, a woman, or a——”

“That will do, Hatfield,” remarked Grafton, with a slight touch of sternness, “I hardly contemplate calling upon the men for any cutting-out expedition in this emergency, though I may want your help, my friend,” he added, softening the severity of his rebuke by his last words.

The friendship begun years since between the two men had ripened into intimacy—although Hatfield was much the junior in years as well as rank to Grafton—and the footing between them when not on formal service was one of hearty affection and familiar intimacy. This was an unusual relationship between the captain and first lieutenant of a frigate, yet the younger man never presumed upon it, and the older man never condescended on account of it, and no mischance had arisen.

“And you shall have it, Captain Grafton,” replied the younger man impulsively. “Might I, without presumption, ask the lady’s name?”

“De Rohan,” answered Grafton. “The Countess de Rohan, the grand-daughter of the Marquis

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de Chabot-Rohan, in whose castle I was confined five years ago. I met her then as a little girl, and as luck, nay, Providence, would have it, I fell into her hands again in Canada, when I was wounded and captured, you know."

"It seems to me you have a happy knack of falling into the hands of pretty ladies as a prisoner."

"Yes, haven't I?" assented Grafton, smiling faintly.

"I wish some such luck would come to me, then."

"Don't wish it at all, my young friend, 'tis a dangerous situation to be in."

"Have you found it so?"

"Yes, I'm a prisoner forever."

"Gad, there are worse fates! But are you engaged to the lady, captain? Don't answer me if I ask an impertinent question, but if I am to help you, I should like to know something."

"Well, er—no, not exactly, in fact, not at all. She is betrothed to Lieutenant Denis de Vitré, of the French navy."

"Oh, to him!" exclaimed Hatfield, who was familiar with the public history of de Vitré's exploits in Canada.

"Yes."

"And is she—er—in love with him?"

"No."

"Well, is she—ah——"

"Yes, with me."

"And can't you get her to break her engagement?"

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“ I don't know, I think not. That isn't all. Of course the old marquis, her grandfather and only relative, is to be considered, and he will probably have chosen some one in France for her.”

“ That is a complication, indeed.”

“ Yes, isn't it? But it seems to me that the more people there are in the game the better chance for me. You see, so long as she—ah—loves me, I seem to hold the winning card.”

“ Of course, but what do you propose to do? ”

“ I'm not sure. I shall deliver the despatches to Sir Edward, and then I think I shall ask permission to go ashore. You see, I know the lay of the land thoroughly, and I am familiar with the old castle where she lives, the Château de Josselin, 'tis called. It lies on the shore off the mouth of the harbour entrance. There is a way into it that no one knows but the lady, and I think——”

“ Why do you hesitate? ”

“ Well, I saved the man's life, and his honour too—de Vitre's, you know—and I hardly like to steal his betrothed bride; you see, he could not very well resent it if I did—er—gratitude. I feel the obligation I have conferred——”

“ Nonsense! Forgive my frankness, you've done enough for him already. You gave him life, honour, let him be satisfied with that. Take love for yourself, captain.”

“ I think I will, Hatfield, and so——”

“ In short, you mean to carry her off, do you? ”

“ Yes, that's about it.”

“ Cutting out a woman, eh, rather than a ship? ”

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“ Yes. Now that you know the situation, what say you? Will you join me? ”

“ With all my heart! ” cried the younger man, his eyes dancing with excitement, “ and I should like nothing better. Gad, ’twould be an exploit indeed if we could succeed! They’d talk about it forever in the clubs. ”

“ Thank you. I knew you would, and we will succeed or die, my friend, ” responded Grafton impetuously, without considering that the prospect of death could not be so inviting to his friend as it was to himself in case of failure. But Hatfield was game.

“ Well, ” he said, stretching out his hand, “ here’s my hand on it. Success to our enterprise! ”

“ That’s good, ” replied Grafton, immensely relieved. “ I was sure I could depend upon you. ”

“ Now tell me how you propose to get into the castle if she’s there. ”

“ I think she will surely be there. De Vitre is a thorough sailor. I’ll say that for him, and a thorough gentleman, too. He picked out the fastest ship in the basin. You know the French build better ships than we do. He has probably driven her as hard as we have and he had several days’ start of us. His orders take him to Brest, and ’tis most natural that he should take her to the Château de Josselin, which is her grandfather’s castle. There is an oriel window in the keep tower overlooking the sea, and there is a practicable way of gaining the balcony surrounding it. ”

“ Land ho! ” came floating down from over their heads.

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“Where away?” cried Hatfield promptly.

“Broad off the weather bow, sir.”

“That ought to be Ushant,” remarked Grafton.

“Yes, and just where we thought it would be, off yonder.”

“Hold on as we are, Hatfield. We will soon raise it from the deck. We must be making all of ten knots in this ripping breeze. Do you think she could stand the mainto’gallant sail?”

“Hardly,” answered Hatfield, throwing a glance aloft. “Well, perhaps she might, but what would be the use of it, captain? We’ll be there quickly enough, anyway.”

“Perhaps you are right. But we ought to have seen some of Sir Edward’s fleet before this. I don’t understand it. Aloft, there!”

“Sir?”

“Do you see any sails to leeward?”

“No, sir.”

“Or anywhere?”

“No, sir.”

“Keep a bright lookout for them.”

“Ay, ay, sir.”

“He’d hardly be cruising so far offshore as this, would he?” said Hatfield. “You know when he blockades he does it closely. They say he’s been holding Brest so tightly closed all summer that a bird could not fly in or out of the harbour without being noticed.”

“Yes, that’s his way. I don’t know whether he will be there or not now, though, since it’s so late in the season. But let me tell you, Hatfield, he’s

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done an unprecedented thing in sealing up the Brest fleet so long. I think it was old Cloudesly Shovel who said that a man was a fool and ought to be broke if he kept his ships out in the Bay of Biscay after September, and here it is the middle of November, and that war brig we spoke last week said that he was still there when she left, and looking as if he were going to stay there all winter, too."

"Yes, that's like him."

"Like him! I should say so; I was a reefer on the Devonshire when he knocked L'Étendue's squadron into a cocked hat, and I've cruised with him since; he was an old friend of my father's before he died, used to stop at our house when he came to Boston, while he was on the West India station. In fact, I began my sea service with him. I never saw such a man. He's as swift as a frigate bird, and when he strikes he hits like a storm. He never lets go either, and such a fighter! He's well named Hawke, I think!"

"Ay, but I very much doubt our running across him this morning," exclaimed Hatfield. "We should have seen a frigate surely by this time if he were there. You see, this westerly gale has been blowing for three days, or maybe longer, and he'll find it difficult to keep his position with such a heavy fleet on a lee-shore. Besides, the wind keeps the French tight in the harbour. He may have run over to Plymouth, or Torbay, ready to dash out again when the wind shifts."

"And perhaps give the French a chance to slip

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out, too. I'll wager a pound to a penny he's been praying they would try it all summer long."

The frigate, on the quarter-deck of which the two men had been speaking, had been moving rapidly through the water and they were much nearer the coast now. Indeed, the blink of the land—the dim blue haze upon the horizon which tells of voyages ended and havens near, and sometimes of wreck and disaster, when the storm gods are out—could be seen now from the deck, and the stern cliffs of Ushant were rising higher with every passing moment.

Save for the land before and to the north of them the horizon was clear. There was not a single ship in sight. It was evident that Sir Edward and his blockading fleet had gone away.

"What'll you do now?" asked Hatfield.

"Well, we'll run in a little farther, I think," continued Grafton, "we can at least see if the French are still in port. Perhaps we can find out what they are about to do. Then we'll bear up for Torbay, try to overhaul the fleet, and deliver these despatches and the news."

"And Mademoiselle de Rohan?"

"As to her, later, I am afraid."

"You won't try for it now, then?"

"I think not, I must deliver these despatches first of all."

"You have not given up the idea, though?"

"I never give up anything, Hatfield," answered Grafton resolutely, "and I'd as soon give up life as Anne de Rohan."

CHAPTER XXII

THE BOAT IN THE PASS

It was evening. The Maidstone was beating to and fro off the mouth of the harbour of Brest. The wind was still blowing hard on shore and the French ships were securely bottled up. They could not beat out of the narrow channel. At least it would be a dangerous undertaking and the game would be scarcely worth the candle. Therefore the Maidstone, although her approach had been noticed long since, had been permitted to come as close as she dared unhindered.

The position of the English frigate was somewhat precarious also. On a lee-shore in a half a gale of wind, in unfrequented and most dangerous waters, only consummate seamanship and unremitting vigilance could save her from disaster. It was there, not only in Grafton himself, but in his dashing young subordinate as well. The two, by carefully watching the ship, managed to keep their distance safely from the reefs under their lee.

From the foretop-mast cross-trees by the aid of a good glass Grafton had discovered unmistakable signs of preparation in the French fleet still wind-bound in the harbour. Many boats were passing

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between the ships and the shore, troops were being embarked, and provisions and supplies taken on board the huge line-of-battle ships and the frigates. It was quite evident that a movement of some sort was in contemplation; and it was more than probable that as soon as the wind served, taking advantage of the absence of the blockaders, the French would put to sea.

That was news of the highest importance. If they could learn the destination of the fleet there would be nothing left to be desired except an opportunity of meeting them; an opportunity Hawke would make if he were given the vestige of a chance.

“Hatfield,” said Grafton, as he came down from the cross-trees for the last time, it being too dark to see farther, “I have changed my mind. I am going ashore to see if I can not find out something about the plans of the French fleet.”

“And you want me to go with you?”

“No, that can not be. You must look after the ship. I will take the dinghy and one man, old Jabez Slocum. Now, mark me. My plan is to land at a little cove I know of under the lee of the Château de Josselin, about which I told you. I shall effect an entrance to the castle immediately, and see if there is anything to be learned there. If not, I will take Jabez and we will sail boldly into the harbour and find out what we can.”

“And you will see Mademoiselle de Rohan?”

“Perhaps. I hope so, though that is not my main purpose. At least I would go even if I knew

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she were not there. Now, if I am not back by eight bells, midnight, you will brace up and make the best of your way to Torbay and tell Sir Edward what we have learned."

"Yes, but you will hardly have time to get there and back by midnight, Captain Grafton. Don't you think it would be better to make it, say, eight bells in the midwatch, or four o'clock in the morning? I'd hate mightily to run away and leave you."

"Very well," answered Grafton, "that will give me more time, and perhaps it would be better not to leave without exhausting every possible opportunity of getting information as to the destination of the French fleet, for there is no doubt in my mind that they intend to move."

"Nor in mine."

"Very well, then, we'll make it eight bells in the midwatch."

"And if you are not back then, I'm to make the best of my way to Torbay, or Plymouth, or wherever I can find Sir Edward, deliver the despatches, and tell what we have seen?"

"That's it. Now, I need not tell you to watch the ship carefully on this hard lee-shore, and when you start for Hawke, if I am not here, drive her for all she has in her."

"I will do both, Captain Grafton."

"Of course. And if the wind should change and the French should send out a liner or a couple of frigates after you, you are on no account to wait for me or anybody. The information we have

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gained is of much more importance than a half dozen captured frigates. Remember that running, not fighting, is your rôle. Don't hesitate on my account. Don't be captured, and don't be wrecked."

"Very good," answered Hatfield, "I shall carry out your instructions to the letter. But I wish I could go with you."

"I wish so, too, but you can't. One of us must stay by the ship. Remember that the fate of England is resting on your shoulders," continued the older man gravely, "for 'tis perfectly well known if the French get away from Brest successfully, and are not beaten elsewhere, they have an army all ready for a descent upon Ireland, or perhaps England herself."

"I shall remember it," answered Hatfield solemnly.

"That's well. Now, heave to and have the dinghy dropped overboard. See that the mast is stepped and the sail is close reefed; put a compass, a beaker of water, a couple of muskets, and a bag of bread in her; stow away forward a coil of signal halliards and a stout rope with a grapnel bent on the end of it—about thirty fathoms of each, I think—and send old Jabez to me in my cabin."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Hatfield, calling the hands to the braces as Grafton turned to the companion-way and went below, whither he was followed shortly by the old sailor he had designated, with whom he spent a few moments in busy preparation. Presently the ship was hove to and the dinghy

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dropped alongside. Grafton and Slocum came on deck. Grafton wore his uniform and both men were fully armed with sword, or cutlass, and pistols.

“You are surely not going in your uniform?” queried Hatfield.

“Yes, why not? I’ve no mind to hang as a spy, and if I am captured in this uniform I’m a prisoner of war only. Remember my instructions.”

“I shall not forget them.”

“Good-bye.”

“Good-bye, and God bless you. I shall be in a fever of anxiety until you return,” exclaimed the lieutenant as they parted.

Waving his hand Grafton stepped to the gangway and dropped easily down the battens into the boat, whither Slocum had preceded him. A vigorous shove sent them clear of the frigate; a bit of close-reefed sail was hoisted on the dinghy and she gathered way toward the distant shore.

It was a wild night. The wind came in fierce squalls and gusts, still blowing directly on land. The sea was very rough, and they had felt it severely on the deck of the large ship, but in the little boat the pitching was simply tremendous. No better seamen, however, ever lived than the two who handled her. Old Jabez had been a Gloucester fisherman in his young days before he took to man-o’-war cruising, and he was actually more at home in a small boat than in a great ship. He steered the shallop and watched her going, meeting every wave or squall with a nice dexterity that filled

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Grafton with admiration, even though the officer was engrossed in thinking over and planning for his night adventure.

After two hours of hard running, having at last come well within the harbour mouth and reached a point opposite the old château, they bore up and began ratching in toward the shore. It seemed to the old sailor at the helm, after they had made several short tacks, that they were getting perilously near the breakers. As he peered ahead he thought he could see the white caps, and he believed, as he turned his ear up to windward, that he could hear the roar of the mighty waves. One more tack and they would certainly be in the midst of them.

Grafton had ordered him to throw the dinghy up into the wind and check her way while he investigated the situation. He had gone forward and was kneeling down by the mast peering ahead trying to get his bearings. Finally, having satisfied himself as well as he could in the darkness, he called out a command to the sailor at the tiller. Although it looked like certain destruction, old Jabez was too thorough a seaman to hesitate to obey, and when Grafton directed him to put the helm over he let her go off, slipped out the sheet, and in a few seconds they gathered way and were rushing straight for the breakers.

They could now dimly make out the black mass of the cliffs before them. In the tower of the château which rose above them were two lights. Grafton sought them out from other lights in other

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windows in the castle. He was sure of the tower, for he thought he recognised its conical top; though the darkness was so deep, there were signs of a break in the clouds—in fact, they had broken over the tower. Was that a star above it to lead him on?

One light Grafton surmised came from the oriel window in the tower, the other from the window of the room adjacent to it. By what happy fortune did they chance to be lighted that night? If he were right in his opinion he knew his course to the mouth of the passage to the little bay. Once in the channel leading to it, he would have to trust to instinct to feel his way through.

If he were wrong and these were lights from other portions of the castle—well, God help them! He had studied the locality carefully and his retentive mind had preserved a vivid and, as he trusted, an accurate picture of it during all these years. It was useful knowledge and he had treasured it. In daylight he could have made the difficult pass with ease, and if the lights there were where he thought them, he felt that he could find it even in the darkness and storm.

“Mind your steering, now, Slocum!” he cried. “Keep your weather eye lifting and obey my orders exactly! Our lives depend on it. Starboard a little! So! I think we can win through, but it’s touch and go. Steady! Do you see those two lights?”

“I sees ’em, sir.”

“Keep them in range until I say further.

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Steady, now! Nothing off, for God's sake, man! Hold her up to it!"

The boat steered with an uneasy helm. She had a tendency to fall off, to go to leeward, that is; but old Jabez set his teeth hard, contracted his brows, and, peering steadily out at the lights high above and far ahead of them, kept her on her course.

They were nearing the shore rapidly now; it looked awfully close. The cliffs loomed up in front of them grim and terrible. There was no entrance through them, no rift even, no way that he could see. Their course seemed madness. Another moment and they would be beaten to pieces. But the business of the old sailor was to obey orders and steer the boat. He put everything else out of his heart and watched and listened, all his skill and training and discipline at his own command, and at his captain's service.

"Well done!" Grafton called back to him. "Now let her go off a little. Easy, now! Very well, dyce! Port, once more. So! Port, port again!"*

"Port it is, sir!" cried Jabez, as the boat's head fell off to starboard in obedience to the command.

Then, in compliance with the rapid and changing directions of Grafton, he luffed up to port and

* He probably said "Larboard" instead of "Port," but for euphony, and a better understanding on the reader's part, I have ventured to use the modern equivalent of the old phrase.

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then again swung to starboard; twisting about, in obedience to Grafton's instinctive conning, through the narrow pass through the reefs.

They were right in the breakers now. The waves were hissing, boiling, and roaring around them on every side. The sea was white with the surf. The old man thought his last hour had come in that riven sea; the rapid succession of commands from the captain, however, left him no time for reflection; the boat whirled about, darted back and forth, swung from side to side like a mad-woman, a Bacchante, under their skilful handling. She seemed doomed a dozen times, and that she was not shattered was wonderful. Suddenly, right in front of them loomed a black mass of rock.

"Luff!" roared Grafton. "Luff her hard!"

The little boat spun around once more like a dancing girl, her starboard side just scraping a jagged reef. The sail shivered and slatted as she came leaping up into the wind, and then bore away on the other tack.

"That was a close shave," screamed Grafton, "but we're all right yet. Give her a good full now. God! But it's dark! We've lost the lights, but I think we can feel our way. Hard over!" he shrieked, as another rock rose up in front of them.

As they cleared the rock, they suddenly whirled about, swept through a narrow opening, and found themselves in smooth water. The cliffs rose high above them on every side. The wind, though they could still hear it roaring faintly, seemed to die

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away suddenly. The change from the wild clamour of the pass to the silence and stillness in the bay was startling. The dinghy drifted in for a few moments and then slowly came to a standstill, the water lipping along her keel. The men sat quiet, but with beating hearts and panting breaths from their labour and excitement, until they had recovered themselves in a measure. Far above them towered the massive walls of the château.

"We are in," said Grafton at last, a note of triumph and relief thrilling through his voice.

He clambered aft and grasped the hand of the old man.

"By Heaven, Jabez, I never saw such steering! We were gone a dozen times but for you!"

"'Twant my steerin', yer Honour, s'much as 'twas your pilotin' got us in," remarked the old sailor, wiping the sweat from his forehead with his other hand. "'Twas a close shave all the way through. Wot next, sir?"

"Out with the oars, now, and let us row to the shore," he said, taking the tiller while Jabez shipped the oars. "Gently, man!" he added, as the boat surged rapidly forward under the old sailor's powerful strokes.

Presently her prow touched a little stretch of beach a few feet wide, which Philip remembered to have seen right at the foot of the place where he determined to make the attempt to descend the wall of the château.

"Now, Slocum," he said, "pass me that coil of signal halliards."

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When the mass of light but strong line was handed him he slipped the coil around his neck.

"Ef I mought make so bold, yer Honour, wot are ye goin' to do?" asked the sailor.

"I am going to ascend the wall of the castle yonder."

"Good Lord!" ejaculated the old man, "it can't be done. Why, 'tis a regular pressipyce! I c'n shin up any r'yal mast that ever was set, but that 'ere——"

"That'll do, Jabez. I've been here before and I know it's possible to scale the wall. It has been done before—by a lover."

"'Taint fer the likes o' me to speak to you," said the old seaman; "but lovers allus was fools, they say, w'ich I ain't never been one, an' mebbe Providence watches over 'em special like, but as fer sailors——"

"I am a lover, too, Jabez, if it comes to that. 'Tis not only for England that I go into that tower. Now, we've talked enough. I am going to climb to that window from which the light is coming. D'ye see it? The one with the balcony. Then I am going to drop the end of this piece of signal halliards down to you. I want you to bend on the end of that coil of rope in the bow to it. Be sure to make it fast to the grapnel end. Then I'll haul it up, hook it to the balcony, and have a ladder to come down again."

"Werry good, sir."

"Then you are to stay in the boat here and keep a sharp lookout for anything and everything.

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Have your muskets ready for use, too. You're a good shot, aren't you?"

"I used to be, sir."

"I remembered it. Now, if I should happen to fall you are to pick up what's left of me and take it back to the ship—if you can get back."

"An' if you don't come down, sir, w'ich God forbid——"

"Wait until about four bells in the midwatch for me, as near as you can guess the time—here, take my watch and then you can be sure—and then make your way as best you can to the ship. It will be easier to get out of this little bay, I think, than it was to get into it, especially if the wind shifts off-shore. Keep her reefed down and take it slowly; you must remember something of the pass from our coming in."

"If you ain't here to go with me, cap'n, I don't care w'ether I gits out alive or not. I'll jist jam her head fer the openin' an' let her go. Damme, beggin' yer parding, sir, I wish you'd take me into that 'ere tower, too."

"I would rather have you down here, Jabez. Good-bye; remember what I told you," Grafton said, extending his hand to his faithful if humble companion.

"I won't forgit none of it, sir," answered the old man in a melancholy voice, shaking his captain by the hand.

CHAPTER XXIII

LIKE A BIRD IN THE AIR

GRAFTON sprang lightly to the shore, and finding a suggestion of a path up the cliff, clambered slowly over the stones, until he stood on the narrow shelf of rock at the foot of the tower. He threw his head far back and looked up along its slanting surface. The clouds had broken now, and though the sky was still adrift with them racing before the wind, he could see, around the black edge of the crenellated top, a star or two.

As he gazed upward that peculiar optical delusion which seizes people who look up at the sheer pitch of a lofty building came upon him. It seemed to him as though the castle were swaying toward him; as though in another moment it might fall and crush him. He lost all sense of the considerable inclination of the tower, or if there were any variation from the perpendicular; it seemed to him to slope back over his head, instead of away from him. It was an appalling sight. He stood at gaze a second or two with his heart failing. Then he shook his head and looked straight before him.

"This will never do," he murmured, "if I hesitate longer I shall be lost."

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He leaned his forehead against the wall and closed his eyes, breathing a prayer at the same time, and having recovered his calmness thereby, he slowly and cautiously began the ascent. He put his foot on the first projecting stone and reached across the rough surface until his fingers clutched another jutting block. Then he swung himself into the air.

The place had grown strangely still. He did not hear the roar of the breakers outside, and the scream of the wind fell unnoticed upon his ear. Fortunately he was sheltered from its force because he was on the leeward side of the tower. He could never have managed it if the wind had blown upon him. Perhaps that accounted for the strange absence of sound. But no, something else filled the fearful hollow of his ear and shut out other noises. A series of blows like a hammer seemed to strike him. He was wonderingly conscious of the beating of his heart.

He looked neither up nor down, nor sidewise, but stared straight at the wet stones in front of him as he monotonously plodded up. He dared not look elsewhere, in fact. He found the angle between the tower and the wall presently and with infinite care he made his way painfully upward. Once he glanced quickly above him. The goal was miles away, yet it seemed as if he had been crawling up those rocks for hours.

Once his foot slipped on a round damp stone, and it was only by a superhuman effort, aided by a little larger projection which happened to be

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under his right hand, that he kept himself from falling. But presently, as he fearfully made the slow ascent, his courage returned to him. He forgot the danger and began to feel himself immune from it. England and her service came back to him, Anne sprang into his mind. She was there, perhaps, behind that window, from which the light streamed out into the darkness, waiting for him, dreaming of him; he should see her in a moment.

The thought lent him wings, he forgot the dizzy depths below him, the unscaled heights above him, he forgot his imminent deadly peril, he forgot himself, in fact. However, he relaxed none of his precaution, as he painfully wormed himself up the face of the tower. With each step he was drawing nearer to Anne, that was the burden of his thoughts.

Presently his head struck the projection at the foot of the balcony surrounding the oriel window. Here was the most difficult part of the ascent; but he was full of confidence now. A few more cautious efforts and his hands clasped the coping of the balcony. Slowly, painfully, he drew himself up, swung his feet over the wall, and dropped softly down to the stone floor.

He was trembling under the strain he had undergone; and until that moment he had not realized what it had been; cold perspiration had broken out on his forehead, his hands were bleeding, but he had achieved the feat. An undertaking, by the way, had he but known it, which the unfortunate Baron de Croisic had only compassed because he had been

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aided by a rope dropped by the hands of the fair Jehane. Grafton's ascent, therefore, had been unparalleled.

He waited a few moments until he had recovered himself, and then, although he was consumed by an eager desire, without looking at the shuttered window, which happened to have the curtains drawn before it as well, he rose slowly to his feet; he took the coil of rope from his neck, dropped it down to the foot of the tower, waited a few moments until he felt a slight tug upon it, and then hauled up the rope, to the end of which was fastened one of the heavy grappling irons, or grapnels, from the ship. He hooked it securely over the coping, coiled the signal halliards up at his feet with sailor-like care, and thus having secured his retreat turned toward the window.

Barred shutters fastened inside prevented him from reaching the glass of the window or the hangings within. He could see nothing. Here was an unforeseen obstacle. After all that he had gone through was he to be stopped by a shutter?

He stood a moment thinking deeply and yet seeing no way. Suddenly he remembered that there were other windows on the other sides of the oriel. He stepped quickly around to the other face, and by happy chance found one open. The guiding light had come from it. The curtains hanging before it were fluttering in the air. He drew them aside a little and cautiously looked in.

The room presented an entirely different ap-

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pearance from his remembrance of it the night in which he had held Anne in his arms there. Then it had been bare, unfurnished, empty; now, thick luxurious rugs were stretched across the floor, inviting couches and chairs, and several gilded tables were scattered around the apartment. Rich hangings depended from the wall. On one table by a vase of roses an elaborate candelabra displayed many lights. A spinet stood against the wall of the room, a piece of music lying upon its rack. The whole room was filled with signs of a woman's occupancy. What woman?

There was a shawl over a chair, a shawl he had seen Anne wear; a work-basket sat upon a low table, and in front of it lay a careless little slipper. He knew its jewelled buckle. He longed to get to it. There was no other foot in France—in the world, even—for that dainty slipper but hers, he thought fatuously. In an instant he divined that Anne had indeed come back and had chosen to make this room her boudoir. His heart gave a great leap as he thought of that association of ideas by which she had been led to establish herself in this spot sacred to both of them.

He would see her in a moment perhaps. She might be in the adjoining room yonder. His heart beat louder than it had on the tower wall. To enter the room seemed almost a sacrilege. Still, there was no other way.

Just as he was about to climb over the sill he heard a footstep in the corridor outside the room. For an instant he thought it might be hers, but a

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second thought undeceived him. He drew back, let the curtain fall, and waited with his eye comprehending the room through the corner of the drapery. The door opened, the hangings before it were lifted, and the sturdy figure of Josette appeared in the doorway.

“Well!” ejaculated the maid, as she stepped into the room and stood looking about her with her arms akimbo, “that’s done, at any rate. Mon Dieu! How beautiful Mademoiselle Anne looked to-night! But how sad her heart! ‘Hélas, Josette,’ she said, as I was dressing her, ‘I care not how beautiful I am now.’ And yet Monsieur le Comte is a gallant gentleman, noble and rich. God send me such a lover some day. Poor Monsieur de Vitré, how sad he looks, too; and as for that English knight, Sir Grafton—well, ’tis he that mademoiselle loves; yes, for him she breaks her heart. ’Twas for him she always looked back, back, back, on that hateful ship. Me, I like not the sea. I’m glad ’tis not I who have so many lovers. One will suit me, if I may choose. That poor Englishman. Dame, if I had been he I had stolen her away willy-nilly. She would have forgiven him, I know; love like hers forgives all. But now she will never see him again——”

“Don’t be too sure of that, Josette,” whispered Grafton in her ear.

Taking advantage of a moment when she had turned her back to the window, he had slipped into the room and approached her. He must trust some one, and who better than the girl whom he

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knew to be devoted to her mistress and not unfriendly toward him either?

She promptly opened her lips to scream, an attempt which Grafton frustrated by clapping one hand over her mouth and forcing her into a chair with the other, sternly bidding her be quiet as he did so.

“Is it a spirit?” she wailed. “Oh, monsieur, for the love of Heaven——”

“Nonsense!” softly answered Grafton, “be silent! Can’t you see and feel that I am alive?”

“But we left you in Quebec, ill, wounded——”

“Did you think that I would stay there forever? I have recovered, as you see, and I have come for mademoiselle. Where is she? Is there not some place where we can talk? Will any come here?”

“No one will come here, monsieur, at least not now, I think. I alone have access to mademoiselle’s apartments.”

“Where is she?”

“At dinner, monsieur.”

“Oh, and is there any one else here?”

“Yes, monsieur, the Marquis de Chabot gives a dinner to Monsieur le Maréchal de Conflans and the officers of his fleet to announce the betrothal of his grand-daughter to——”

“De Vitré?”

“No, monsieur, certainly not. He is much too little for so grand a lady as mademoiselle.”

“To whom, then?”

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"To his old friend, Monsieur de Kersaint."

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Grafton. "The other man!"

"Yes, monsieur."

"And the countess, does she consent?"

"Her consent was not asked, monsieur. The marquis announced it when they arrived three days ago. 'Twas settled before we came."

"And de Vitré?"

"He is in agony, monsieur. Monsieur le Marquis laughed at her when she tried to tell him. He said it was nothing, impossible, preposterous. Oh, you should see that poor young man, his heart is breaking!"

"I care nothing for his heart, Josette, but as to mademoiselle?"

"Her heart is breaking too, and she says——"

The maid hesitated, perhaps fearing she was betraying her mistress.

"Yes, what does she say?" he questioned her, bending on her a compelling gaze.

"She says she does not care who it is, since—so long as it is not—you, monsieur."

"O Josette, bless you for those words! What does Monsieur de Vitré intend to do?"

"I know not. He speaks of carrying mademoiselle off, but she will not hear of it. He appealed to her plighted word, but she says she will approach her grandfather in time. He must give her time. The French fleet is going out to capture the English, they say. Monsieur de Kersaint and Monsieur de Vitré go with it. Mademoiselle says

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‘Who knows?’—but I ought not to tell you this, monsieur, you are an enemy.”

“Not your enemy, Josette, nor mademoiselle’s.”

“I ought to give monsieur up to the marquis,” remarked the Breton girl doubtfully, “he would never forgive me if he knew.”

“Do you serve mademoiselle or the marquis, Josette?”

“Mademoiselle,” exclaimed the maid fervently.

“And would she give me up, think you?”

“No.”

“She loves me?”

“Ah, monsieur!” cried the girl, “you can not know how she feels. If monsieur could see her with her pale face and with her eyes full of tears! If monsieur could hear her murmuring in her sleep his name! She chose this tower for her room because the window looked toward Canada where she thought monsieur was. Alas, poor mademoiselle!”

“When will she come back here?”

“After the dinner is served, I think, when the gentlemen take their wine.”

“Josette, I must be taken where I can see them at the dinner.”

“’Tis not possible, monsieur!” cried the girl.

“It must be; there must be some way, some place where you can put me! I remember! Doesn’t the armory open from the dining-room?”

“Yes, but——”

“Take me there, then.”

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“But your uniform! If they see you as you go through the hall?”

“Bring me your long cloak, Josette. We are about the same height, are we not? Wrap that around me. I will draw the hood over my head. You must go with me. Will any one question you?”

“No one, unless we meet Jean-Rénaud or the steward, and they are both likely to be in the dining-room.”

“We will have to chance that, then. Come, no more objections! 'Tis for the Countess Anne's sake. I must see her. I will save her. Remember, if you betray me, you break your mistress's heart!”

“Very well, monsieur, remain where you are,” cried the girl, convinced at last. “I will get the cloak. For Heaven's sake, sir, stay quietly in the room until I return.”

When she left him he stooped and picked up the little slipper which Anne had evidently carelessly left there when she went in to her dressing-room to make her toilet for the dinner. He gazed at it, covered it with kisses, and slipped it hurriedly into the breast of his coat as Josette returned.

As he had said, they were about the same height. Her cloak fitted him perfectly. She wrapped it around him and it completely concealed him. Laying aside his cocked hat he drew the hood over his head, hiding his face, and then the two descended the stairs, passing one or two servants who looked at them curiously. Fortune fa-

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voured them. Jean-Rénaud was in attendance upon the marquis, the steward was busy supervising the service of the dinner, and no one else presumed to interrogate so important a person as the chatelaine's confidential maid and foster-sister. They gained the armory without difficulty.

There Josette left him after exacting a whispered promise from him not to leave the room until she came for him. The door opening into the dining-room, and which was veiled by heavy hangings, happened to be ajar. Through the opening between the curtains Grafton had a clear view of the apartment beyond.

CHAPTER XXIV

NUMBERED—WEIGHED—DIVIDED

THE great Gothic apartment was ablaze with light from hundreds of wax candles in sconces set between the banners on the wall, or in the massive candelabra standing upon the long table which was glistening with a gorgeous service of rare and massive plate. Ancient flagons of curious shapes from Flanders, cups from Italy that Cellini might have chased, exquisite dishes of the finest *Sèvres pâte tendre*, the royal porcelain of France, first coming into use at that time—Madame de Pompadour's one good gift to humanity—were ranged upon the board. Wine of the rarest vintage, fabulously old and each drop priceless, sparkled in the tall crystal goblets which some roving ancestor had brought from Venice. The damask linen cloth was strewn with strange and beautiful orchids from the matchless conservatories of the château, their odd shapes and lavender hues vividly outlined against the snowy napery.

Servants in the gorgeous mediæval livery of the de Rohans flitted noiselessly about serving the numerous guests. Musicians from one of the ships in the harbour discoursed sweet melodies in an

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adjoining chamber. In short, nothing had been left undone to give honour and magnificence to the feast. The resources of the château had been lavishly displayed, and Versailles itself could scarcely have afforded a more splendid showing of luxurious elegance and wealth.

Around the board were grouped men bearing the names of some of the noblest families in France. At the head, of course, sat the Marquis de Chabot-Rohan himself, old Jean-Rénaud standing erect behind his chair. On his right, in the seat of honour, was placed Admiral de Conflans, who, in addition to his exalted naval rank, was also a marshal of France. Next to the marshal-admiral was placed the venerable and princely Archbishop of Vannes. Below him sat his Highness the Prince de Beauffremont-Listenois, the vice-admiral of the fleet—unfortunately not destined to add to his renown in the coming campaign.

After these in order of rank were ranged the chief officers and captains of the van division of the great French Armada. Among them, near the foot of the table, sat Denis de Vitré. He had been duly exchanged since his arrival and promoted to the rank of capitaine-de-frégate, and recently appointed executive officer of *Le Thesée*, still under the command of the Comte de Kersaint de Kerguelen.

Grafton's glance took in this line with one quick survey, and then turned to the other side of the table. His gaze swept past the marquis and rested upon the person who sat at his left hand. This place was occupied by the grand-daughter of the

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house. He looked at her for a second, then closed his eyes as if the sight had dazzled him. Never had he seen her so beautiful, never had she presented so splendid and glorious a picture. Not in his most rapturous lover's dream had he imagined this.

She wore a dress of pale violet satin, with pipings of white and lacings of silver over the pointed bodice. It was cut low, of course, after the fashion of the day, and afforded a full view of her dazzling neck and shoulders. The gaze of other men upon them seemed to Grafton a profanation.

She was a perfect blaze of diamonds. The jewels of centuries, known and storied in the de Rohan traditions, had been wrought by cunning artificers into rare and beautiful forms to present a fit setting for her radiant beauty. A coronet of gems flashed in the mazes of her powdered hair. Diamond stars caught the bertha of matchless point lace which fell low over her corsage; diamond clusters fastened the little white plume that curled backward, like a sunbeam in a twilight, over her hair, rising softly from her sweet brow in the fashion of the time.

Low at her corsage she wore a bunch of priceless orchids whose purple and violet hues shot with touches of gold blended so exquisitely with the fabric of her gown.

The men about that table were dressed with the magnificence and splendour characteristic of that age of display; the scarlet and blue of the navy, the white and gold of the army, the green of the marine corps, the royal purple of the bishop's vest-

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ments, the yellow and silver of the waiting attendants, blended and harmonized in one vivid kaleidoscopic mass of shifting hues. The soft light sparkled on many a diamond star and was reflected from many a jewelled order on manly breasts; but the glory of the Countess Anne was undimmed by the contrast; in this galaxy of colour she was like the sun amid the stars.

Grafton had eyes for no one but her. He had known that she was beautiful even in the simplicity in which she had always been robed when he had seen her. He had known that she was the fairest of women, to him at any rate, but he never realized until now how magnificently royal she was in her rare and exquisite loveliness. His heart sank as he looked at her. She was one in a world. Surely this treasure in which Nature summed up the achievements of the past and anticipated the possibilities of the future could not be for him! But if not for him, for no one, he swore. Yet he felt an intense sympathy for poor de Vitré, sitting haggard at the foot of the table, eating nothing, moodily draining his glass and staring at Anne. She was as far from him as heaven.

Next to Anne, with the permission of the guests on account of the nature of the occasion, the marquis had placed the Comte de Kersaint, whose naval rank would not have entitled him to so high a seat at the table. Next to de Kersaint sat the gallant rear-admiral, St. André du Verger, soon to die and win an immortal name for his heroism in the approaching battle. By his side was placed Monsieur

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de Bompart, chef-d'Escadre, or commodore, commanding a division of six ships of the line which had recently entered the harbour, aided by the unfortunate gale which had compelled Hawke to break the blockade for the time being—a welcome re-enforcement indeed for de Conflans.

As Grafton's glance finally turned to de Kersaint, his latest rival, he was forced to admit that he was no unworthy competitor for Anne's hand. Not without a certain stateliness and dignity was the bold figure of this superb sailor. Of splendid physical proportions, indicating great strength, with indomitable courage written on his brow, with rank and station apparent in his simple yet easy bearing, and with a slight bluff bonhomie added; in spite of his years, he might well hope to win a woman's heart.

De Kersaint's family was among the oldest in Brittany, his means ample, he might fairly be termed wealthy, in fact; and he stood so high in the favour of the King that in all probability, if he lived, he would finally be made the admiral of France, an office of the greatest consequence. Long since he had become one of the most distinguished officers in the French navy. He was an adversary, in love or war, the most formidable, and not to be despised.

He had only aspired of late to the hand of the charming girl who had so confidently liked and admired him as her father's friend when she had been a child; but if Grafton could judge from the way he looked at her, he made up for his tardiness by

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his ardour in the end. He was a widower of many years' standing, and his son had already made a name for himself in the service. He had no other children. The marquis had gladly welcomed the alliance offered him, and the two men had settled it together before Anne had appeared upon the scene.

The feast of the evening had been made to announce formally the engagement of Anne to de Kersaint. The countess had protested, and had again directly broached to her grandfather the subject of her plighted troth to de Vitré. The marquis had refused to hear her; as before, had pooh-poohed the whole affair as a girlish flirtation. What had maidens to do with hearts? he questioned. Those were luxuries reserved for married women. In the ethics of France in that day a maiden's duty was obedience. As for de Vitré, he was a cadet of an obscure house, no match for the last and most beautiful of the de Rohans. She surely was not in earnest!

Her grandfather's refusal would indeed relieve her honourably of the attentions of de Vitré, since she had expressly stipulated for his consent. But between de Vitré and de Kersaint she preferred the former, or, to speak by the card, she preferred neither. She wanted Grafton, and Grafton only. She was in as great unhappiness therefore in this new development as before. Unable, or unwilling, at that time, to break into open rebellion, especially now that she was separated apparently irrevocably from Grafton, Anne deemed it well to temporize. In spite of her flight, her renunciation of him, she

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was waiting and hoping to hear from the man she loved. She had only stipulated, therefore, that there was to be no formal betrothal, and that her grandfather should confine himself to the simple announcement at the feast that it was in contemplation.

Like Grafton, she was fighting for time. Indeed, in the engagement to de Kersaint she really thought there was a loophole for an escape before her. Between de Kersaint and de Vitré what might not happen? She was fully resolved never to marry de Kersaint, and her resolution with regard to de Vitré was not so strong as it had been. Absence, separation, both pleaded powerfully for Grafton. So she waited—and hoped still.

As for de Vitré, he had been cordially welcomed in France and had been promptly promoted when the story of his heroism had been made known; but his shrift would have been short indeed if he had presumed to cross the path of the marquis, whose influence with de Conflans was unbounded. It was well known that the French intended to get to sea at once. Opportunities for distinction would certainly occur. He could not afford to jeopardize his chance for service. Therefore, he was forced to endure the situation in silence. Yet it is possible that none of these considerations would have weighed with him had not the course which he pursued been enjoined upon him by Anne herself, under threat of immediate and final rejection. He, too, therefore waited and hoped.

The face of de Kersaint, as Grafton surveyed

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it, was filled with joy and good-humour. The Frenchman noted with evident satisfaction the glances of admiration and envy which were cast at his end of the table, and it was plain to be seen that he was entirely satisfied with the situation, and the complacency of the old marquis was equally apparent. The engagement had not been formally announced, but every one was practically aware of it.

Laughter, jollity, merriment, subdued by the refinements and requirements of good breeding, floated around the table. Joy and good-humour were reflected from every face except two. Hearts beat high in anticipation. The officers of the squadron, who had not yet received orders for the departure, felt that it was in the wind and eagerly anticipated it.

Tired of the long days of inaction while blockaded by Hawke, they longed to get to sea; the reinforcement which Commodore de Bompard had been luckily enabled to bring them made them equal in strength to their haughty enemies, and they were fain to get at them. With sailors' abhorrence of land, they thirsted for blue water and the open sea, the heave of the unquiet deck, the sing of the wind through the cordage, when the ship tossed and pitched on the waves in the salt air. They were going out, they felt sure, and they waited expectantly for the word.

Grafton, who had ample time to study the people in the dining-room as the banquet progressed, marked with a thrill of happiness that the universal joy was not reflected in the face of his love. Never

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had he seen it colder, paler, more filled with that ineffable disdain he loved to note when not meant for him. There was not the slightest touch of mirth and happiness in her features as her eyes restlessly swept the table. When her glance fell upon the huge and happy Frenchman who sat next her, Grafton noticed that she seemed to shrink from him. None but a lover's eye could have detected the movement, but to him it was plain.

He stared steadily at her through the little opening in the curtain until she became restless under his intent look. Her eyes wavered, and finally became fixed upon the hangings behind which he stood, with a look as if they might have burned through them. Her lips parted slightly. He could see the more rapid rise and fall of her breast as she leaned forward. He could almost swear that she saw him.

Indeed, an influence which she could feel but not recognise drew her eyes toward his own. She could not see him, she did not dream he was there, but some impelling force caused her heart to beat madly. De Kersaint spoke to her, but she took no notice. The marquis, noting her abstraction, turned in surprise, and then quietly laid his hand upon her jeweled fingers stretched listlessly upon the table. She seemed to wake with a painful start, passed her hand over her brow, and looked at him.

"Gentlemen," said the marquis at last, the repast having been concluded by this time, "before the Countess Anne retires I wish you to drink a health with me."

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“A health! A health!” cried the men, thrusting their chairs back from the table, seizing their full glasses, and rising to their feet as they spoke.

“Messieurs,” cried the old man in his high-pitched old voice, “I give you the health of the Demoiselle de Rohan and the Comte de Kersaint, and I announce to you the engagement which has been entered upon between this son and daughter of Brittany, to carry on and perpetuate the two ancient races.”

This was death and agony to Grafton. It was only by the strongest constraint that he could keep himself from bursting into the room.

“Vive la Demoiselle de Rohan!”

“Vive de Kersaint!”

“Long life and happiness to the pride of Brittany!” resounded through the hall as the men drank the toast with enthusiasm.

“Shiver your glasses, gentlemen, when you drink to the Demoiselle de Rohan!” cried the marquis when he had drained his own, at the same time dashing his priceless cup to the floor.

Amid the crashing of the crystal, therefore, Anne, pale as a ghost, the image of everything but joy, rose to her feet and lifted her own glass.

“Messieurs,” she said softly, “I drink to you and to France.” She bowed low before them amid a murmur of admiration evoked by her grace and beauty, and continued: “And I thank you. And now, with your permission, Monsieur le Marquis and gentlemen all, I will withdraw. Resume your

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seats, messieurs. I thank you again for your congratulations."

The marquis handed her to the door. Grafton noticed that she tottered as she withdrew. The scene had been too much for her. He had shot one swift glance toward the foot of the table, too, and he had noticed that one glass had not been lifted when the toast had been drunk, and that it still stood brimming with wine upon the board in front of the haggard de Vitré. The American pitied him, his misery was so great and so apparent. Meanwhile congratulations from all sides were bestowed upon de Kersaint. The men crowded around him, shaking him by the hand, drinking healths to him from fresh glasses which had been brought, and overwhelming him with acclamations which he bore with good-humoured modesty.

Grafton would have left the armory at once to follow Anne had he not faithfully promised Josette to stay there until she summoned him. He waited, therefore, in increasing impatience. He was glad, however, even in the midst of his passion, that he had remained, when he heard Admiral de Conflans tapping the table and requesting silence.

"Gentlemen," he said, as the tumult died away and the men subsided into their seats once more, "with the permission of my friend, the Marquis de Chabot-Rohan, I will propose a toast to you, and at the same time make an announcement. The English have been driven from the blockade by the fierce gales and I intend to go to sea. Amid such loyal friends and supporters I do not hesitate to

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say that we are bound for the enemy's country. I first propose to take the English squadron in Quiberon Bay, to embark there the officers and men of the brave army commanded by Monsieur le Duc d'Aiguillon and Maréchal Belloc, and then away for Ireland, crushing any one who may endeavour to stay our progress; and if that be Admiral Hawke, let him look to his ships!"

The hall was filled with shouts of approval and joyful acclamations.

"A moment, gentlemen," continued the old admiral, smiling his approbation of the enthusiasm of his subordinates and making a fine figure, with his powdered head, weather-beaten, haughty old face, his rich uniform heavy with gold lacing, and his breast covered with orders—"a moment, while I give you the toast. Fill your glasses all and drink deep with me: Death to the enemies of the King, confusion to the English, success to our endeavour! Vive la France!"

A perfect roar of applause and acquiescence swept through the room. Men sprang upon the chairs crying and cheering, some tore down the banners and flags from the walls, waving them frantically, and shouting themselves hoarse in their excitement. They would shout another way, sing another tune once the grim English Hawke got his talons in them, thought Grafton—still, 'twas a pretty sight. He alone seemed to read an old sentence on the wall.

"When do you sail, Monsieur de Conflans?" asked the archbishop, when he could be heard above

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the tumult. There was an instant silence as they all waited in tense excitement to receive the reply.

“Monseigneur,” answered the old admiral, inclining his head toward the prelate, “I beg you to invoke a blessing upon our undertaking. Silence, gentlemen!”

The officers stood with bowed heads while the venerable archbishop, rising and lifting a white hand in the air, breathed forth an eloquent prayer for the success of their arms. The amens with which the guests ratified his passionate petition were not less deep and fervent than had been their cries a moment since.

“Most Reverend Father,” returned the admiral, as the prayer was concluded, “as to the time of sailing? As soon as the wind changes, monseigneur, and lets us get away from the harbour.”

There was a sudden clashing of arms on the stair. A young soldier, an officer of cavalry, strode into the room through the open door. He stopped before the admiral, clicked his heels together with military precision, and saluted.

“Monsieur le Maréchal,”* he said, “I have a message to you from the port admiral.”

“What is it, sir?”

“He bade me tell you that the wind had changed within the hour and ’tis now blowing fair for you to leave the harbour.”

“Gentlemen,” cried the admiral, “we sail at six in the morning. We have much to do. Monsieur

* Admiral de Conflans was also a marshal of France.

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le Marquis, you will pardon us if we withdraw thus early? Come, come, messieurs, the toasting and feasting are over, the time of war begins.”

Grafton felt a touch on his arm. The anxious face of Josette loomed up out of the darkness near his shoulder.

“Come with me,” she whispered softly.

As he turned to go, he heard the admiral say to de Kersaint:

“Monsieur, you may remain here an hour or two longer. Your ship, I know, is in readiness to weigh anchor, and so long as you are aboard at the appointed time I shall be satisfied. I am loath to part you from so charming a *fiancée* in so unceremonious a way. Yes,” he continued, in answer to a question, “you may retain Captain de Vitré.”

Grafton drew the hood over his head once more, and wrapping the cloak closely about him turned and followed the nervous Josette, as she stepped rapidly through the hall and up the stair. The corridors were filled with gentlemen and servants, and though one or two cast glances of curiosity and suspicion at the maid and her companion, they were neither accosted nor detained. Just as they entered upon the stair the steward came into the corridor and gazed earnestly at them.

As Grafton found himself mounting the tower stair he discovered his heart beating almost to suffocation. He was to see Anne, to speak to her again, perhaps to take her in his arms, to kiss her once more. He forgot his frigate outside, he forgot the French fleet, his duty, everything, for the moment,

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but his love. How would she greet him? He would soon know. They were approaching her door.

“Have you told her that I am here?” he asked Josette.

“No, monsieur.”

“That’s well.”

“Shall I announce you now?”

“By no means. Do you stand by the door here and give me warning of any approach.”

“You would not harm the Countess Anne, monsieur?” she asked, laying her hand upon his arm and looking at him beseechingly. “You will remember that she is but a woman who—loves you?”

“I love her too, Josette. I swear to you I would rather die than harm should come to her. Rest easy. And enter without hesitation should I be in danger of discovery. Is this the door?”

She nodded her head. He pressed her hand softly, opened the door, parted the curtains, and entered the room.

CHAPTER XXV

THREE LOVERS COME TO THE TOWER

THE Countess Anne was seated in a chair at a table at the other side of the room within the oriel window. She was dressed just as she had been when she left the dining-room a few moments before. She sat with her back toward him and with her face buried in her hands. He could see by the trembling of her shoulders that she was weeping. He had made no sound as he entered and she did not look up. He stood for an instant watching her, his heart in his gaze. Time meant liberty—nay, life—to him, yet if the sword had been at his throat he could not have refrained from that moment of contemplation.

How exquisite was her beauty, that wandering lock of hair curling so tenderly about her neck! How he longed to kiss it! He moved a step nearer to her, involuntarily stretching out his hands toward her. At the same moment she lifted her head and looked out into the night through the window in the direction of Canada.

“Philip, Sir Philip!” she whispered pitifully. “So far away!”

He took a step nearer. It was painfully still

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within the room. Perhaps she heard the beating of his heart, for she slowly turned her head and stared at him. He stood before her eyes as if rooted to the spot.

“Philip,” she murmured softly, doubting her senses, “is it a dream? Am I a child again, that you stand here in the old room, in the old tower where first you loved me, where first your lips met mine? Philip!”

She rose to her feet and turned toward him. He could not move, she fascinated him.

“Philip!” she cried again, her voice rising in joy and fervour mingled, “is it indeed you? I left you in Quebec. How came you here?”

She tottered toward him in lovely bewilderment, but her strength had been so sorely taxed that it now gave way—she swayed unsteadily and would have fallen. Another step took him to her side. He clasped her to his breast, strained her to his heart so tightly that he hurt her as he covered her surprised face with kisses. She sank into his arms. Her head fell upon his shoulder. He felt the sinuous, supple yield of her slender body as her hands met around his neck. For the moment neither spoke. Presently he turned her lovely face up to his own again. He looked into her eyes once more. Not the blackness of the night outside the dark tower was so deep and full as they.

“O Philip!” she whispered, returning kiss for kiss. “You have come back to me. Thank God, you have come back to me!”

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“ Yet you left me in America, Anne. You left me without a word! How could you? ”

“ My letter? Did you not receive it? ”

“ Ay, but not a word from your lips. You left me alone, ill, helpless. But there—I will not reproach you. I followed you; I would have followed you to the end of the earth. Did you not know it? Did you not dream that I should be here? ”

She nodded her head.

“ I looked for you, I waited for you, I knew you would come, my own! ” she murmured, laying her cheek upon his shoulder again with a long sigh of utter content.

He was here, he was hers, she was his, he held her close in his strong arms—what more? His clasp was so tight, he crushed her so against his breast, that the diamond cross she wore was pressed deep into her tender bosom. What mattered it? The pain was sweet to her, 'twas love's brand. He would never release her now. She was his only. The weary days of waiting, the long voyage over the stormy seas, the plans of her grandfather, the hopes of de Vitré—they were forgotten. Honour, faith, obedience—he had conquered.

“ Yours, yours only, Philip, my darling—yours, yours, yours only, ” she murmured again and again as she felt his beating heart. It was so restful in his arms she surrendered herself to him in passionate devotion. She nestled against him as a child, who was seeking peace and longing for a haven, might have done.

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"But how came you here, Philip?" she asked at last, withdrawing from his arms a space that she might look at him.

How handsome he was, how like a king!

"Do you not remember that night in the tower, my own?"

"Have I ever forgotten it? There you kissed away the child, and from that moment I loved you. 'Twas for that reason I bade them make my room here."

"You recall the story of Baron de Croisic, sweet—how we wondered if one could climb the wall?"

"Yes, yes, and you said, given a sufficient—what was the word, Philip?"

"Incentive, sweet Anne, and with you at the top I could have climbed to heaven."

"O Philip!" she shuddered, "and did you come up that awful wall this dark night? How could you do it?"

"Love lent me wings. I saw you at the top. I pictured this moment. 'Twas hope and a light heart that lifted me up, my darling."

"And if you had fallen?"

"Then you would have been troubled no longer, Little France."

"I should have laid my body beside yours, Philip, at the foot of the tower wall," she cried, trembling and pressing him to her heart once more.

"But your engagement, Anne?"

"O Philip, that is not all. Not only did I promise myself to Monsieur de Vitre, but——"

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“You were betrothed to-night to de Kersaint.”

“You know?”

“I was there.”

“There? Where?”

“In the armory, behind the curtain.”

“Ah!” she cried. “’Twas you that made me look and gaze!”

“Yes, ’twas I. But you do not love this man?”

She laughed.

“Philip, my Philip, can you not see whom I love? There is not a throb of my heart that is not for you. Ah, would that you might say the same!”

“I do say it, dearest. I swear it!”

“But that picture in the locket?”

“Set your heart at ease, Anne. In a little while you shall know the mystery of that.”

“I have no mysteries from you, Philip.”

“Nor shall I have from you, love, when this poor story is told. But tell me, what is it you will do?”

“I know not. My honour was pledged to de Vitré, although, with my grandfather’s refusal, that conditional promise is broken, and I am free there. My heart is given to you, and my grandfather plights me to de Kersaint. What shall I do?”

“Follow your heart, Anne; love is the safest guide. Listen. I have a rope here attached to the tower, I can lower you safely and easily down. There, in a little bay below, a trusty man and a little boat are ready for us. Outside on the ocean my stout frigate waits us. Come with me. In one day

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we are in England, free, and we shall be married at once. Trust me as you love me. I will give up my commission in the navy of England, if you wish; we will go back to America, and there, in your mother's land, Anne, make home and happiness together."

"Philip," she cried, persuaded yet resistant, "I—I can not."

He gently led her toward the window, faintly protesting, feebly struggling. How masterful he was, this wooer who would not be denied! Could she resist him? Her will—ay, but her heart, was traitor, and to every plea he urged it beat yes, yes, yes!

"Mercy, Philip! De Vitré! Monsieur de Kersaint! My grandfather, my country, my home! Pity me. Do not ask. I am weak before you. I can not, and yet, if you say so, I must! Oh, look not so!"

"But you love me. Can you not trust yourself with me? Will you not give up all these things for me? Love is selfish—yes, I know it; but that I can not help. I must ask you to throw aside all of your life for me, and me alone! I love you so! Nay, you shall, you must! Come!"

He bent lower to her and poured his soul into her own in burning glances. She had fought a good fight, she had struggled to keep her heart and keep her faith. It was over.

"I throw them all aside, Philip!" she cried, the relief of the decision apparent in her joyous voice. "And if you will take me as I am, I will

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go with you to England, to America, to the end of the world, even!"

But the sacrifice he asked with love's egotism, and which she was so willing to make with love's altruism, was not to be.

"Some one comes!" cried Josette in great agitation, thrusting her head through the door. "Quick, hide yourself, monsieur, or you are lost!"

It would be impossible for him to carry out his plan of lowering her from the tower now; it would take time, and they must be unhindered.

"Go, go!" cried Anne, "you will be captured—killed!"

"Without you! Never!" answered Grafton. "You must conceal me."

"But where?"

"There!" cried Josette, pointing to the countess's bed-chamber. "'Tis the only place."

She opened the door into the adjoining room. Grafton, pressing a kiss upon Anne's cold cheek, sprang through it and closed it after him. He felt himself awed in that peaceful haven of her maiden innocence, as if he had stepped into a sanctuary, before a shrine. He remained standing by the door, which he had left slightly ajar, so that he could both see and hear all that went on in the other room.

"Sit, mademoiselle, control yourself!" cried Josette, as some one tapped at the door.

Anne, trembling violently, sank down on the fauteuil, turning her face from the light, and

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struggled resolutely for composure, while Josette opened the door. Instantly a young man dashed by her.

“Monsieur de Vitré,” cried Anne, rising to her feet in haughty surprise, “how dare you come to my apartments uninvited, sir?”

“Mademoiselle,” cried the Frenchman, “I am so desperate I could go anywhere! I have sat silent too long. I have heard you engaged to Monsieur de Kersaint in the hall below, yet your troth is plighted to me. Forgive me, I am mad, crazy! To see you, to love you, to have you promised to me, and then to listen to this announcement tonight! I know not what I do. You are mine, mademoiselle, and yet you have scarcely allowed me to kiss your hand. Is this the fidelity of a de Rohan? Your hand is promised, you were not free. He shall not have you. You are mine by every right!”

“Stop, Monsieur de Vitré! My word is—was—yours, and I had honestly meant to keep it, but do you not recall that in the hall of the Château St. Louis I told you when I first permitted you to consider yourself engaged to me that it all depended upon the marquis; a declaration, sir, that I repeated in my own house in Quebec, when you were released from confinement, that I have said over and over again to you in the ship? He would not hear of it, sir, even when we broached the subject tentatively. 'Tis impossible. And there is one right, sir, that you never had.”

“And what is that, pray?”

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“ I do not love you, sir, nor did I ever pretend to do so.”

“ Do you love this de Kersaint, then, mademoiselle? ” cried the Frenchman furiously.

“ Monsieur, you have no right to question me.”

“ Right? Are you not my promised wife? But I remember, you told me that you loved no gentleman of France. Is there any one else? You blush, mademoiselle. That Englishman? What a blind fool I have been. But he has no more chance than I. De Kersaint takes the prize. Did you plight Captain Grafton your troth, too? And I can not resent it. I can not kill him. I owe him too much—life, honour, I was going to add—you. You!” She shivered under the scorn in his voice. “ But I pity him, too,” he went on. “ He depends on your love, and I on your honour. The love of a traitress, the honour of the de Rohans, mademoiselle!”

He laughed bitterly in a way not good to hear. Suddenly his glance fell upon the table by the window. There was something there. He stopped as if petrified with astonishment.

“ What’s that? ” he cried.

“ Sir! ” said Anne, furious with indignation, and yet, in her heart, a certain pity for this unfortunate lover, as he made a sudden dart past her. “ How dare you? Retire from my apartments, or——”

“ I came in alone, mademoiselle, but I shall go out with the wearer of this,” he exclaimed fiercely, lifting a hat from the table. “ Whose head fits this

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châpeau, I wonder—the marquis'? De Kersaint's? Ha, 'tis laced—a naval hat! An English hat, mademoiselle. Who is here?"

"Grafton," murmured Anne in surprise, taken off her guard.

"He is here, then?" he cried jealously. "Where is he? Mon Dieu, in that room, your chamber? Stand aside, mademoiselle. Let me pass!"

"Never!" answered the girl resolutely. "You presume too much, sir, upon my forbearance. Leave my room instantly!"

Another second and Grafton had broken forth; a new sound checked him, however, some one else was coming. He listened once more.

"Who speaks thus roughly to the Demoiselle de Rohan?" said a deep, harsh voice, as old Jean-Rénaud entered the room. "Monsieur de Vitré, how dare you address my mistress in this way? Did I not hear the Countess Anne beg you to retire, sir? Her will is law here. Monsieur, will you go, or not?"

He stepped toward the young man threateningly, all his rough Breton fidelity at the service of his fair young mistress.

"The marquis!" whispered Josette, whose acute ear had caught the tramp of feet in the hall, whose glance had recognised her master. "He is coming!"

"I am lost!" said de Vitré.

"Nay," cried the quick-witted maid, "step behind that screen yonder and be silent as you fear

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your life. They suspect something, I am sure. Oh, what escape is there for us!"

With feelings that can scarcely be imagined, Anne sank down in her chair again, striving vainly to compose herself for the expected entrance of her grandfather. The room swam before her, yet she strained herself up to meet the situation. What was the cause and what would be the outcome of this visit?

She could hear him outside her door in the hall now. He had not come alone, evidently; for there was the sound of many steps upon the stone flagging of the corridor. Presently there came a tap upon the door. Josette, at a nod from her mistress, opened it. The marquis entered, followed by de Kersaint and one or two attendants with lights.

Anne rose to her feet as both gentlemen bowed profoundly to her.

"Mademoiselle," began the marquis in his stateliest manner, "I have brought with me your old friend and new lover——"

"Nay, my dear marquis," interrupted de Kersaint, who was not without the gallantry of his race, "pray say, old lover as well as old friend."

"As you will. At any rate, my dear granddaughter, Monsieur de Kersaint has come hither to bid you farewell."

"Be seated, gentlemen," said Anne. "Does Monsieur de Kersaint go farther than Brest, monsieur?"

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“Mademoiselle,” answered the sailor, “he who starts upon a cruise in war knows not how long his journey nor where it ends.”

“Does your ship sail, then?”

“Yes, mademoiselle, at six o’clock in the morning.”

“And the other vessels?”

“The whole fleet goes out under Monsieur de Conflans himself to fight the English.”

“I hope God may have you in his keeping, monsieur.”

“Thank you, mademoiselle, but have you no kinder wish with which to send me on my way? The marquis, your grandfather, has announced our engagement. May I not seal it upon your lips before I go, Mademoiselle Anne?”

The two men who were listening, the one behind the screen, the other behind the door, were filled with jealous rage at this, and, with an absolute parallelism of thought, would have given worlds to rush forth upon the Frenchman who professed this natural request.

“I would rather not, monsieur,” faintly answered the girl, shaking her head.

“But, my dear, when you were a child I carried you many times and kissed you often.”

“Yes, monsieur, but I am a child no longer. You will wait, I am sure, until—you have a better claim—a more binding tie.”

The two listeners breathed a sigh of relief as they heard Anne’s resolute denial. Indeed, had she yielded, or had de Kersaint pressed the point, Graf-

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ton, for one, would have broken forth and killed him before he had touched her lips.

“You will respect the scruples of a maiden, de Kersaint,” said the marquis. “I rejoice that her long absence in Canada has not weakened her adherence to the principles which I have endeavoured to inculcate in her when she was a child. The demoiselles de Rohan were ever chary of kisses, but you will find that they are lavish in honour, and when you come back you may claim her as your bride, and then——”

Grafton ground his teeth over this significant hiatus.

“Mademoiselle, it costs you little to say No, and me much to say Yes, but for you I will do it. I can refuse you nothing,” responded de Kersaint, bowing low over her hand. “I shall long for the day when, the last barrier broken down, I may claim you as my own.”

“God speed that time, say I,” remarked the marquis.

“Thank you, de Chabot,” answered de Kersaint, “but now I must set forth. Good-bye, mademoiselle.”

“Adieu, Monsieur de Kersaint.”

“Nay, nay, not adieu, but au revoir.”

“Au revoir, then, monsieur, and may God protect you.”

“May the prayer of the beautiful be heard,” answered de Kersaint, turning slowly away.

CHAPTER XXVI

DE VITRÉ PAYS FOR HIS LIFE AND HONOUR

“ATTEND Monsieur de Kersaint, Jean-Rénaud,” said the marquis to the old retainer, who had been an interested spectator of the whole transaction, as the count stepped to the door. But before either the sailor or the servant had passed through the entrance, the marquis’ steward appeared in the way.

“Pardon this intrusion, Monsieur le Marquis,” he said in great agitation, “but there is something which monsieur should know. There is a stranger—a spy, perhaps, somewhere in the château. One of the servants told me that he saw a woman, or some one, in the armory during the dinner listening; and others have said that one cloaked and hooded flitted along the hall and came up these stairs after the dinner. I thought monsieur would not wish any one to know what passed at the table and I ventured to come here.”

“And you did well, Basile,” answered the marquis. “A cloaked figure, a woman, then. What sort of a cloak?”

“One like mademoiselle the countess’ foster sister wears,” answered the man slowly.

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“What, Josette!” exclaimed the marquis. “De Kersaint, stay a moment until we look into this. Come hither, woman!” he cried to the affrighted maid. “Know you aught of this?”

The girl was almost paralyzed with terror as she slowly stumbled nearer him. As for Anne, she sank back in her chair as if stricken. Was Grafton about to be discovered, then? Fortunately, no one noticed her at the time.

Josette stopped before her master, white with fear, dumb with apprehension.

“Answer me!” cried the marquis. “Speak! Ha! what is this?” he exclaimed, stepping across the room and picking up the cloak from a chair where Grafton had thrown it. “Was this it?”

“I judge so, Monsieur le Marquis,” answered Basile.

“Speak, woman!” thundered the old man. “Whose cloak is this?”

“Mine, sir,” faltered the girl.

“And who wore it to-night?”

“I—I did myself, sir.”

“Were you in the armory listening?”

“I—yes—sir. Oh, mon Dieu, mon Dieu!”

She sank on her knees on the floor, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

“Will Monsieur le Marquis pardon me?” said Basile insistently. “The person, a man, perhaps, was seen with Madame Josette.”

“Ah, so!” cried the marquis, turning fiercely to the prostrate woman. “You have lied to me, then?”

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“Yes, monsieur,” she sobbed.

“Who was it? Speak, you fool!”

But the girl only shook her head and sobbed and wailed at his feet. The marquis could get nothing further from her.

“Curse these women!” he exclaimed in deep disgust. “Where did they go, Basile?”

“They came up this stair, monsieur.”

“Have you men outside the door?”

“Yes, Monsieur le Marquis.”

“Bid them search every chamber in this corridor. Now, Mademoiselle Anne,” he said, turning to the countess, “perhaps you can help us. Know you aught of this strange visitor? Has any one been here?”

Anne’s tongue clave to the roof of her mouth, her knees trembled beneath her, her heart stopped its breathing in terror, but she could not lie, even to save her lover. She looked at the marquis in silence.

“There is no one in the other rooms, Monsieur le Marquis,” said the steward as the men reported to him.

“Ha! He must be here, then. Anne, tell me—Why are you silent? What is it, child?” her grandfather bent over toward her. “Speak! I will have an answer! Did any one come here? is there any one here now? By Heaven, these women exasperate me beyond endurance! Jean-Rénaud, you were here when I came in. How long had you been here?”

“But a few moments, Monsieur le Marquis.”

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“ Did any one come in while you were here? ”

“ No, monsieur. ”

“ You have been a faithful servant for fifty years, you would not lie to me. I ask you again, did any one come while you were here? ”

“ No, monsieur. ”

“ Your pardon, de Chabot, ” interrupted the Comte de Kersaint, “ let me ask another question. Jean-Rénaud, was there any one here besides made-moiselle and her maid when you came in? ”

The Breton looked stubbornly at the sailor.

“ You are not my master, Monsieur de Kersaint, ” he answered.

“ Answer his question, Jean-Rénaud, ” said the marquis sharply.

The old man stared at the two gentlemen in silence.

“ Answer it to me, then. ”

The lips of the old servant remained sealed.

“ You dog! ” shouted the marquis furiously. “ How dare you disobey my orders! And to what end? Your silence proves that some one was here. Who was it? Speak, I command you! On your allegiance, by your faith, by the duty you owe me, I charge you. I wish to know who was here. I will know it! Ten thousand devils! ” he roared, exasperated beyond measure at the man’s stubborn silence. “ Will you speak, or not? As God hears me, if you do not answer immediately, I shall pass my sword through you! ”

“ That is as monsieur pleases, ” answered Jean-Rénaud sturdily. “ Monsieur is a gentleman, and I

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am only a Breton peasant, but I have my ideas of honour, too. Serving monsieur and his son for fifty years in this house, how could it be otherwise? And my honour bids me be silent. Monsieur may kill me, I am his man, my life is his, but monsieur can not make me speak!"

Furious with rage the marquis shortened his arm and drew back his sword.

"Strike not, de Chabot!" cried de Kersaint interposing, laying his hand upon the other's arm. "What need? 'Tis certain some one is here. The silence of the maid, the acquiescence of mademoiselle, and the refusal of this old man to confirm or deny, prove it beyond a doubt. There is no exit from this or the other chamber, if I remember the castle, save by the door through which we came. The man or woman must be there. Let us search. Honour your servant for his ancient fidelity, de Chabot. He would not betray a woman. There is some one here—some one in the room of the woman I love, the woman who is this night plighted to me. Let us search. That door, yonder? What room is that?"

"Monsieur," cried Anne, stepping across to the door, her face aflame, "'tis my bed-chamber. You may not pass within it but over my body."

She had not remembered de Vitré, but she was on fire to protect Grafton. Yet it was a desperate, a hopeless situation. No matter, she would fight for him to the end—they should not harm him.

"Mademoiselle, assure me on the honour of a

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de Rohan that there is no one there and I withdraw."

She endeavoured to speak, vainly moistening her dry lips, but she could not, so she stood silent and determined between him and the door behind which Grafton, his sword out, his blood up, was in readiness to make a dash for liberty. But his time was not yet.

"Enough, de Kersaint," exclaimed the marquis, "you may not enter those sacred precincts, but I, an old man, grandfather to this wayward child, may go anywhere. Stand aside, Anne—or——"

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the girl, dropping to her knees before the door. "*Mère de Dieu!* Help me, have pity upon me!"

"Oh, he is in there, then? A moment, de Kersaint, and you shall have him before your sword," cried the marquis, springing forward.

Grafton thought his hour was come. But no, not yet!

"Search no farther," exclaimed a sharp voice from the other side of the room, as de Vitré, pale as death, threw down the screen and revealed himself. He had heard all, divined all. Anne loved him not. He would sacrifice himself for her, for her lover, pay back some of the debt he owed to Grafton.

"Oh, thank God, thank God!" cried Anne, rising to her feet and shrinking back against the door-frame.

"Monsieur de Vitré!" the marquis called out, in great surprise.

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“Captain de Vitré, by Heaven, what do you here?” demanded de Kersaint, springing forward threateningly.

“Messieurs, I came here as the rightful betrothed of Mademoiselle Rohan, as the man who had received her troth in New France. Resolved to make one more appeal to her, I left the banquet-hall to throw myself at her feet.”

“Did you come by the invitation of mademoiselle?” asked de Kersaint.

“No, monsieur. I came unannounced.”

“You love this man, mademoiselle?”

“Alas! no, Monsieur de Kersaint,” answered Anne. “I esteem him. He sought my hand under peculiar circumstances in New France. I consented, subject to the acquiescence of Monsieur le Marquis, and when I told him of it he laughed at me.”

“’Twas but a boy and girl affair, de Kersaint, not worth mentioning,” answered the marquis.

“But he came here?”

“Yes, yes, monsieur,” cried Anne. “But without an invitation, and, indeed, unwelcome. The mystery is now over. Retire, gentlemen, I beg of you. This has been too much for me.”

The marquis started to speak, when something caught his eye and he stopped as if petrified. Resisting his first impulse to cry out, he slipped around to the table near the screen, and covering it with his person remained silent, his gaze fixed in cold suspicion upon his grand-daughter. As for de Kersaint, he would let him fight his own battle; af-

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terward he had other plans. De Kersaint stopped and thought a moment.

"You came," he said at last to de Vitré, who stood pale and haggard with folded arms before him, "without invitation?"

"I have said so."

"Unwelcome?"

"Alas! yes."

"Mademoiselle did beg him to retire," broke in Jean-Rénaud. "I heard her."

"And monsieur would not go away," added Josssette, who had regained her voice.

"Your attentions were not pleasing to mademoiselle, then?"

"No, monsieur, I fear not."

"By God, sir!" cried the Frenchman in sudden passion, "you are my executive officer, my trusted subordinate, but if we were not about to sail I would challenge you so that I might pass my sword through you! As it is, sir, you shall be dismissed the ship. I'll not sail with you, you disgrace your uniform!"

In his anger and surprise de Kersaint had forgotten about the cloak and the spy, it seemed.

"Monsieur," cried de Vitré, desperately, at this threat, "think a moment. I was mad with love for mademoiselle. She was my promised bride. Never had she permitted me a greater privilege than to touch my lips to her hand. No one would consider me. I saw happiness slipping from me. Her beauty crazed me. I forgot myself. But 'tis all over now. She does not love me. She has rejected me.

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Oh, monsieur, for God's sake, crush not a broken man! I ask no forgiveness, only an opportunity. We sail to-night. Give me my place upon the ship. Perchance some fortunate bullet may find my heavy heart. Monsieur, you were a young man once. If you love mademoiselle now, think what I have felt and find some excuse.—Mademoiselle," he continued, turning to Anne with a meaning glance, "you will not have me, it seems. All the dreams I have cherished are broken and shattered. My heart is dust and ashes within me. There is left me but one desire, one hope: since I may not live and love you, I wish to die for France. I have done you some slight service, perhaps, in days gone by," he went on pleadingly, "will you not intercede for me with Monsieur de Kersaint?"

"Monsieur de Kersaint," cried the girl, touched by the plea, realizing that he had given himself up to save her and her lover, sorry for his misery, "will you not heed the request of Monsieur de Vitré? You were ever generous, kind. Oh, monsieur, may not that which has moved you—to want—me"—she stretched out her arms toward him—"plead with you to excuse him?"

"Mademoiselle," said the count, looking at her with eyes full of admiration, "I can refuse you nothing. I can not forget this, but I can forgive Monsieur de Vitré. You are excuse enough for anything. By Heaven, your beauty would make any man mad! Rejoin your ship, Captain de Vitré. Perhaps there may be no more friendship between us, but at least you may do your duty."

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“Thank you, Monsieur de Kersaint. Monsieur le Marquis, Mademoiselle de Rohan, farewell!”

“Nay, Monsieur de Vitré, I can not part from an old friend thus lightly!” exclaimed the girl, stretching out her arm. He seized her hand, dropped on his knees before her, and rested his forehead upon it.

“This for life and honour,” he whispered, so that none but she could hear. “Think of me sometimes. Farewell!”

“Go, monsieur,” she said, “and may God bless you! You have the gratitude, the eternal remembrance,” she whispered, “of Anne de Rohan.”

“Farewell, mademoiselle,” said Kersaint, approaching in his turn, “may God speed the day when I may come to claim you again. De Chabot, good-bye. *En avant, de Vitré.*”

“Jean-Rénaud, attend Monsieur de Kersaint,” cried the marquis again, as they passed out. “Basilé, withdraw the servants and wait for me at the end of the passage-way by the staircase.”

CHAPTER XXVII

GRAFTON WINS AND LOSES

As the three men and the servants left the room, with an expression of relief so great that she could not describe it, Anne sank down in the chair by the table. She thought her lover extricated at last from his precarious position. Her emotions during the last few moments, when she feared that the marquis would discover his presence, and then when de Vitré had so nobly interfered in his behalf, had been almost more than she could bear. She forgot for the moment that the marquis had not gone with the others. She had not remarked his suspicious silence, his strange movement, in the excitement of the passing moments.

“Now, Mademoiselle de Rohan,” he said harshly, “since this play has been played out and the actors in the little comedy have departed, will you be good enough to explain the situation? Will you tell me who it was that wore Josette’s cloak; who listened in the armory; whom you have entertained in this room, whom you conceal in your chamber?”

“What mean you, monsieur?” she faltered, all her terror coming back again. “Monsieur de Vitré——”

Grafton Wins and Loses

“De Vitré is a fool,” exclaimed the marquis angrily, “and yet I admire the man. He took it all upon himself like a gallant gentleman.”

“Monsieur de Vitré told nothing but the truth, monsieur.”

“Quite so,” answered the marquis, with difficulty restraining himself. He was in deadly earnest, with the suppressed fury of his most dangerous moment. “Quite so. I have no doubt he told the truth. It spoke in his eyes. But did he tell it all? You answer not. But what need? Did Monsieur de Vitré leave this hat on the table? I have seen hats like that, mademoiselle, but upon English heads.”

“Monsieur,” stammered the girl.

“No more faltering!” continued the marquis, pacing back and forth before her. “He is here. A lover in your room, an Englishman, and you have betrayed me, betrayed your honour; you——” he used a harsh word from the camps. “Stand aside!”

He laid his hand roughly on her arm. She struggled to bar the way, moaning faintly. The door was thrown open, the hangings dashed apart, and Grafton, sword in hand, sprang into the room. At last!

“Monsieur le Marquis!” he cried, “release mademoiselle! By Heaven, no man lays a hand upon her when I am by, not even though he be her father!”

“Captain Grafton!” exclaimed the marquis, involuntarily letting go his grand-daughter’s wrist and falling back in great surprise, “you here, sir?”

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“Why not? I love the Countess de Rohan, and, presumptuous as I may seem, I dare to affirm that she loves me as well. Indeed, sir, since the moment I held her in my arms five years ago in this very chamber at midnight, and kissed away her tears, I have loved her. The fortune of war brought me wounded to her feet in Canada, sir, and there I found I loved her still; and, what was more, I learned that she had not forgotten me. She left me behind wounded and ill, but I followed her here. Sir, I have come to claim her.”

“My God!” faltered the marquis, as if dazed by this sudden development of the situation, “and I trusted her to your honour!” He looked years older at that instant, his face blanched and working. Grafton pitied him.

“Monsieur, I pledge you that honour that I left her as sweet and innocent a child as when I first knew her.”

“And yet you came from her bed-chamber even now, and you kissed her at midnight?”

“’Twas five years since, sir.”

“Do you love this man, Anne?”

“More than heaven itself!” she answered, stepping to his side.

“And you came to take her away, sir, like a thief in the night?” sneered the marquis, his colour coming back as he mastered his surprise and regained a portion of his self-command.

“We had gone, sir, a moment since,” broke in Grafton ruthlessly, irritated by the sneer, “had we not been interrupted.”

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“ Mon Dieu, 'tis impossible you can love this Englishman, Anne! ”

“ An American, sir——”

“ Peace! 'Tis all one. This officer, this enemy of France, this commoner! ”

“ Yes,” murmured the girl.

“ You love him more than family, than country, than rank, than station, than honour? ”

“ More than all the world, monsieur.”

“ And you were here alone with him at midnight in this tower? He kissed you? ”

“ Yes, monsieur, but I was only a child.”

“ You nursed him in sickness in Canada? ”

“ Yes, monsieur.”

“ Were you about to fly with him this evening, as he says? ”

“ Yes.”

“ And he came from your bed-chamber! Oh, mon Dieu, mon Dieu! ” screamed the old man, passion, despair, wounded pride, quenched ambition, frantic rage in his voice. “ The deep dishonour of it! This from my grand-daughter, this from a child of my ancient house! An innocence gone, a reputation blasted, a character compromised! ”

“ S'death, sir! ” burst out Grafton. “ Speak you thus to your own? She is as pure as an angel from heaven! As I live, were you not her grand-sire, and an old man, I'd strike you down! ”

“ And I thought her,” raged the old man, contemptuously disregarding him, “ like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion. Monsieur, you have betrayed my trust, you have violated my sacred hospitality, you

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have compromised my grandchild in the eyes of the world, you have well-nigh ruined my house. You belong to a race I have loathed and hated. This old arm, withered as you see, has used up its strength in striking blows upon your people. I would fain have your life, monsieur," he continued sternly. "Nay, I shall have it presently; but before you die you must cover your actions before God and man, with the sanction, the poor sanction of your dishonourable name."

"Monsieur," cried Grafton in amazement, "what mean you?"

"Grandfather," interrupted Anne, "I am innocent of everything except loving Monsieur Grafton. That I can not help. I swear to you that I am—as I was—when you first took me in your arms—except for love."

"By Heaven, sir," exclaimed Grafton, "are you mad? Can you not see?"

"Silence!" said the old man. "There must be a wedding here this night. Things are permitted a husband which are denied a lover—wedlock covers all. Mademoiselle de Rohan, you must marry this man."

"'Tis the dearest wish of my heart, sir," cried Anne.

"Monsieur le Marquis," said Philip bewildered, "what mean you? Do you consent to my suit, then? Heavens! 'Tis impossible!"

"Consent? No, monsieur, I demand of you, nay, I order, I command you, if there be a vestige of honour left in you, that you marry this misguided

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girl, that you rehabilitate her in the eyes of the world."

"The world knows nothing, and there is nothing to know, sir."

"In my eyes, then."

It was a puzzling situation. Philip longed for nothing so much as to call Anne de Rohan his wife, yet apparently by consenting to this ceremony he would be putting some sort of a stigma upon her honour or her reputation.

"I can not, monsieur, upon this compulsion," he faltered hesitatingly.

"Philip!" cried Anne, who saw nothing of what was passing in his mind and who heard only his refusal, his denial of her. "You refuse me? You betray my heart? Ah, that woman in the locket! Oh, mon Dieu, mon grand-père, kill me, kill me! He loves me not, I am rejected!"

She nearly fainted with the shock and the agony of the moment.

"Monsieur," said the old marquis, his eyes gleaming with anger and determination, "will you marry this girl? Think well before you refuse, sir. The hand of a de Rohan has been offered twice to no one before. Say No, and I kill her before your eyes, and you shall follow her to death. We may wash out the stain upon our honour in blood, perhaps, if not in marriage."

"Enough!" cried Philip, thinking swiftly of the end to be gained and putting everything else aside. "I take her gladly, joyfully, thankfully; not from any threat of yours, old man, but because I

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love her, and by giving her my name I will have the right to protect her from further insult even from you."

"Without, there!" called the marquis, stepping to the hall. "Ask Monseigneur the Archbishop of Vannes to come hither instantly. He has not yet left the castle. Speak to your prospective wife, monsieur, if you will, while we wait. I can promise you no further opportunities after you are married," continued the old man, turning to the door.

It was the one touch of human kindness he had exhibited in the whole interview.

"Why did you hesitate, Philip?" whispered the girl reproachfully, as she looked fondly at him. "You refused me. You almost broke my heart. To lose you now would kill me."

"Only because I seemed to be putting a stigma upon you by consenting," he said softly in reply. "Your grandfather thinks that your honour—forgive my saying it—demands our marriage."

"What matter his thoughts? We know."

"Yes, and I was a fool. You will be my wife, my own, in one moment. You can go away with me with a clear conscience then. And when you are mine let me see the man who will dare question aught!"

"O Philip, I am so happy! 'Tis like life from death. I thought you lost, and now——"

The archbishop at that moment appeared in the doorway attended by Jean-Rénaud.

"You sent for me, my dear marquis?" he said blandly, but in great surprise.

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“ I did, monseigneur.”

“ And for what purpose, pray? ”

“ I want you to solemnize a marriage, that of my grand-daughter and this—this—gentleman.”

“ What, monsieur! ”

“ And now, too.”

“ But, Monsieur le Marquis, did you not say she was betrothed to the Count de Kersaint? ”

“ Monseigneur,” answered the marquis haughtily, “ here is a strange mischance. I can not tell the tale, but the honour of my house requires a marriage, now and instantly, between this young man and the Countess Anne de Rohan. I jest not, monseigneur. *Morbleu!* do I look like a man who trifles? You have known me of old, most reverend sir, I mean what I say. The marriage must take place! ”

“ But Monsieur de Kersaint? ”

“ God help him when he knows the truth! ” said the marquis. “ Will you proceed, monseigneur? ”

“ The young man is of our faith? ”

“ No, monseigneur,” answered Grafton. “ I am a Protestant.”

“ But you can dispense with that yourself, monseigneur,” interrupted the marquis promptly. “ I tell you nothing shall prevent this.”

“ If the young man consents to—— Will you bring up the children of this union, should any be born to you, in the faith of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, monsieur? ” asked the prelate.

“ I will, so help me God,” answered Philip promptly.

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“There will be no children,” interrupted the marquis grimly. “Will you now proceed?”

“But we lack an altar, vestments, lights, attendants, witnesses, marquis?”

“No altar is needed here, and as for witnesses, I am one, Josette is another, and if you want a third, here is Jean-Rénaud—people upon whom I can rely.”

“Mademoiselle,” said the perplexed archbishop, turning to Anne, “do you wish to marry this man?”

“Yes, monseigneur.”

“Do you love him?”

“With all my heart.”

“And you, monsieur?” he continued, looking at Grafton.

“My love and desire, most reverend sir, more than match her own, yet I must say, I protest that this hasty marriage implies no doubt upon the honour of the lady who takes my name.”

“Hell and furies!” cried the marquis inconsistently, “who dares to imply such a thing! Monseigneur, will you proceed, or shall I kill this man before your eyes?”

The brief words which mean so much and bind so fast were soon spoken. Philip and Anne made the responses, and kneeling before the aged cleric received his benediction. As soon as he had finished, the archbishop, realizing that here was a delicate situation, discreetly withdrew and left the participants in this strange wedding alone once more. As they rose to their feet the Englishman turned to

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the woman, all his thoughts swept away in the knowledge that at last she was his wife.

“My own, my own!” he cried, taking her in his arms. But before he could press one kiss upon her forehead the marquis intervened.

“No, sir,” he cried, “you have dishonoured the house of Rohan. You have made what amends you could by marrying the girl. That is all. You shall never see your wife again. I shall kill you where you stand. The connection shall end that way. Draw, sir!” cried the old man, shaking his blade in the other’s face. “Defend yourself, if you can.”

“I will not cross swords with a man old enough to be my grandfather,” answered Grafton—“one who stands in such a relationship as you to the lady I am happy to call my wife. By your consent, by your urging, we were married. She is mine before Heaven itself. No man may part her from me. She goes with me.”

“How will you take her hence, pray?”

“By this window, through which I came,” cried Grafton, lifting up his wife in his arms and springing backward.

“*À moi!*” called the marquis loudly.

The servants came running into the room in response to this call.

“Ha!” cried the marquis. “The Baron de Croisic’s way! ’Tis his tower. You shall end like the lover of the fair Jehane. Jean-Rénaud, seize this man.”

Jean-Rénaud stepped forward slowly. His affections were with his young mistress, and he secret-

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ly admired the gallant Englishman who had won her, yet his duty bade him obey the marquis.

“Back!” cried Grafton, whipping out his pistol and pointing it at Jean-Rénaud. “A step nearer and you are a dead man.”

The man stopped short; he knew decision when he met it.

“’Tis true you have the advantage, Monsieur le Marquis. I can not take Madame Grafton away from you to-night, alone as I am, but be very certain that I will come back for her with force that can not be denied. I shall have her if I have to tear down the castle stone by stone. Take good care of madame, sir,” Grafton continued insolently, “I leave her in your charge. Back, you cattle!” he cried, swinging his pistol toward the servants and lackeys, who were huddled together in the rear of Jean-Rénaud. “Anne, wife, farewell!”

“Monsieur,” said the marquis, striving to regain his wonted calmness, “you may storm the castle if you will. You will not find madame here. When the French fleet sails in the morning we go with her. Now, men, upon him!”

Grafton discharged his pistol at the nearest valet, and as the man fell he hurled the empty weapon into the midst of the rest. With one look at Anne he turned and sprang through the oriel window. He grasped the rope and slid down it rapidly.

The men surged toward the balcony. Anne sprang between them. She caught the marquis by the arm and Josette seized Jean-Rénaud, but the rest swarmed past them and filled the balcony. One of

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the men lifted a dagger to cut the rope. A deafening roar rang out in the night; the man screamed with pain and his arm dropped to his side. Another shot was heard. The crowd shrank back for a few seconds and Grafton reached the foot of the tower. He scrambled down the rocks to find old Jabez, smoking musket in his hand, waiting for him in the prow of the boat.

“Who fired?” he cried.

“’Twas me, yer Honour; I was a-watchin’ the winder. I seen yer Honour come out, then I seen the man raise the knife, an’ I blazed away at him. I hain’t forgot how to shoot nuther.”

“You saved me,” cried Grafton. “Shove off the boat. Lively! Break out the oars; we must get away.”

Slocum sprang to the oars and Grafton seized the tiller. The balcony above was filled with men now. The old marquis was there, and Anne—his wife. He could spare only a second for a glance. The light from blazing torches threw a dim illumination down upon the little bay. A woman screamed. Shots rang out, bullets spattered the water all about them.

“Are you hit, Jabez?”

“No, sir; be you?”

“I’m all right, too; pull, man, pull, for God’s sake!”

Presently they were in the entrance and out of danger. The wind was blowing offshore. The night was mild and pleasant now. The moon was shining. They easily threaded their way among the

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rocks. The mast was stepped, the sail set, and the little boat raced out to sea. They were away, they were free.

"Beg parding, sir, did you git wot you went fer?" asked Jabez, after a while.

"Yes," answered Grafton. "The French ships are to sail for Quiberon Bay at six in the morning."

"An' the leddy, sir?"

"I married her."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed the old man under his breath. "Quick work, that! An' you left your wife?"

"With her grandfather, Slocum. She sails on *Le Thesée* with the fleet in the morning. Not a word of this to the men, as you value my approval. You have done well and I shall not forget it."

"Thank Heaven, you have come!" exclaimed Hatfield, as the dinghy swept alongside the gangway of the *Maidstone* and Grafton clambered on board. "I had almost given you up."

"What time is it?" asked the captain.

Before Hatfield could answer eight bells rang out forward on the forecastle.

"In the very nick of time!" exclaimed Grafton.

"Look yonder, sir," said the lieutenant, pointing away.

The ships in the harbour were ablaze with lights. They were getting under way.

"Ay," said Grafton, "they are leaving this morning, now. The wind has changed. They are going to Quiberon. Square away immediately, and

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crack everything on. We must get the news to Sir Edward before night."

"And the lady?" queried Hatfield. "Did you see her?"

"Yes," answered Grafton, smiling, "I not only saw her, but I married her. Come into the cabin after you are on the course and I will tell you all about it."

BOOK VI
"THE GREAT LORD HAWKE"

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ADMIRAL GETS THE NEWS

It was early in the morning of the fourteenth day of November, 1759. The Maidstone was gently swinging into Torbay. The wind, which had been blowing hard from the southwest during the night, had moderated until it was now a gentle breeze, so that every cloth of canvas, including her studding-sails, was spread on the frigate to catch and hold the light air. Grafton and Hatfield stood on the weather side of the quarter-deck eagerly surveying the roadstead.

The harbour was crowded with great ships of the line, huge monsters, swinging to their anchors, prows pointed out to sea under the incoming tide, now at full flood. The one nearest to the Maidstone, and consequently the farthest from the shore, was a magnificent vessel of three decks, carrying one hundred guns. From her main-masthead a small blue flag could be seen fluttering, which denoted the rank of the commander of the fleet, a full admiral.

The different ships of this great armada with

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nice seamanship had been anchored in their appointed places, and all were in beautiful order. Their sails were furled with the taut smoothness of a glove on a lady's hand, and their ponderous yards squared with geometrical accuracy. Their complicated tracery of rigging and running gear, tautened with mathematical nicety and soaring aloft from the mass of black and heavy shrouds and swifters, springing from top, cross-tree, and yard-arm, in ever-refining and more delicate lines, rose higher and higher until it was focused upon the truck-ends of the slender skysail poles, which terminated the ponderous and towering spars.

Though weather-beaten and storm-worn they seemed fit for any emergency. Like the veterans of an army, they were ready for any demand which could be made upon them, and they looked it. There was a sense of use, of habit, of action, of power, conveyed in their stately repose on the unruffled surface of the water that morning, which filled the young men, who were contemplating them, with pride and delight.

Forward on the Maidstone the foreroyal-halliards had been settled away as she drew up the roads, and her number had been made at the fore-royal-masthead. When it had been acknowledged on the flag-ship, the latter had signalled for the frigate to anchor under her lee. On account of the position of the admiral's ship, the Royal George, well in advance of the rest of the squadron, there was ample room for Grafton to come boldly in head on, with all standing, sweep to port, and make his

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anchorage without interfering with any other ship in the fleet.

This was an operation, however, which required nicety in judgment, accuracy in decision, celerity in action, and perfection in drill and discipline in order that it should be performed well; and it should be well done or should not be attempted at all. The eyes of the whole fleet were already fastened on the frigate. Her number had been as easily read by the signal officers of the other ships as on the Royal George, and it was well known to every one that she had been with Saunders' fleet off Quebec. No tidings had as yet reached this fleet from that far-off quarter, although they had been eagerly expected. Naturally, it was supposed that the Maidstone had news of importance to communicate.

Grafton felt that he would be narrowly watched and critically observed by everybody, and he determined to do the thing up smartly and with precision. The hard cruising of the past month, to say nothing of their varied experiences since setting forth on the Quebec campaign, had turned his men into as fine a body of seamen as could be found then on any ship afloat. Hatfield was a brilliant subordinate who could be depended upon entirely, and the other officers were men capable in their several stations as well.

"Now, Hatfield," said Grafton, "I am going in with everything standing. We'll pass the admiral, sweep to port, and drop anchor on the port side of the flag-ship, just where he wants us. I'm going to take in everything together, and I want the thing done

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smartly. Everybody in the fleet will be looking at us, of course. Pass the word forward that the eyes of the fleet are on us, and that I want the men to show that the Maidstone is up to anything. Not a sound is to be made either, and no action taken, save the necessary movements about the decks. There must be no cheering, and let no man show his head above the rail till I give the order. Pass the word, too, that there will be an extra tot of grog served out when the hammocks are piped down, if we do these things handsomely. Who is at the wheel?"

"Slocum, sir."

"That's well. See that some reliable hands stand by the starboard anchor also. Now go forward yourself and give everything on the fore-castle your personal supervision. I don't want any hitch of any kind to occur. Get the men to their stations for shortening sail promptly."

While the little colloquy had been going on, the frigate, with everything drawing, was gliding along at a rapid rate, dipping and swaying gracefully like a woman courtesying at a ball. They had drawn near enough now to the ship of the line to discern a group of officers attentively regarding them from the high poop-deck. Among them, in front of the rest, in fact, was a stout, heavy-set figure, in whom Grafton recognised the great commander.

The Maidstone made a superb picture from the flag-ship. There was just wind enough to fill every sail rap full, and she slipped easily through the water, rocking and pitching as gently, as noiselessly, as

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a summer cloud driven across the sky by scarce-felt breezes. They were drawing nearer to the Royal George with every moment, though still far from her. Now they were lapping her headbooms, now they were abreast of the forecastle. It was time.

“Stand by to take in the light sails and the fore-sail! Man the royal and to’gallant clewlines, the flying jib, and stuns’l downhauls; overhaul the sheets and halliards! Man the fore clew-garnets and buntlines!”

There was a moment or two of bewildering confusion—or so an onlooker would have concluded—as the men sprang to their respective stations. The gear was thrown from the pins and led along the decks by the crowding men, the coiled sheets and halliards were got ready for running, and all preparations made. Then there was silence for a space.

Grafton lifted his hand.

“Stand by!” he cried. “Haul taut! Shorten sail!”

He spoke in a low, clear voice, which was yet distinctly audible throughout his ship. As the words fell from his lips the boatswain’s mates piped shrilly, the men on the decks made a clean run with the clewlines and downhauls, the sheets were eased off, the halliards settled away, the yards came down, the studding-sails were dropped from the yards, the booms were rigged in, and in a trice the light canvas was left hanging in graceful festoons from the yard-arms. It had been done beautifully, and the ship had been stripped so far as if by magic. Silence

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supervened again after the men had cleared the decks for the next evolution.

“Starboard the helm!” said Grafton. “Man the tops’l, clewlines, and buntlines! Jib downhaul, the spanker outhaul! Hands by the tops’l sheets and halliards! Haul taut! Let go the tops’l sheets! Clew up! Down jib! Out with the spanker! Hard-a-starboard!”

As this rapid succession of bewildering orders were carried out, like a great bird the ship swept gracefully up into the wind. Presently, as she headed for the flag-ship still sweeping to port, the top-sails shivered in the breeze; with nothing drawing her way was already greatly checked, she was almost at a standstill, though she was still swinging around in that long, graceful curve.

“Settle away the tops’l halliards! Clew down!” shouted Grafton. “Round in the braces!”

She had swung farther now. Her broadside was opening toward the flag-ship. Her way was almost checked. Her headbooms were overreaching the quarter of the other vessel, she was quite in the designated position now.

“Right the helm! Stand by the starboard anchor! Man the spanker brails! Let go the starboard anchor! Brail in!”

With a mighty plunge the great anchor dropped into the still waters of the bay. The hempen cable rushed through the hawse-pipes, the ship surged slowly ahead a moment, and then, her way checked by the pull of the cable and the flooding tide as well, she stopped, settled back, and slowly dropped

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astern, where she swung to the full scope of the cable. She had come to rest exactly where she should be. It could not have been more deftly done if she had been picked up and set down in the designated spot.

“All hands furl sail! Lay aloft, topmen!” called out Grafton, a note of triumph in his voice.

In an instant the shrouds of his frigate were black with men swarming aloft, the light yard men, of course, in the lead. With nimble feet they ran up the shaking rigging, laid out on the broad yard-arms, and began to roll up the drooping canvas.

Old Hawke lifted and waved his hand toward the frigate, and, as if it had been a signal, a thousand throats on his own ship sent forth a ringing cheer of acknowledgment and greeting.

The men had been watching the movements of the Maidstone with intense interest and appreciation. They knew good seamanship when they saw it. Hawke was a thorough sailor and would tolerate no one who was not, in any ship or fleet he commanded. Grafton's heart swelled with pride and pleasure as he lifted his hat and waved it toward his generous superior in grateful acknowledgment. And, indeed, never had a delicate manœuvre been more gracefully and smartly performed.

As soon as the men, who had finished their duties most expeditiously, had laid down from aloft, and had begun to square yards and clear up the gear, Grafton directed his gig to be called away, and temporarily relinquishing the charge of the ship to Hatfield, he repaired on board the flag-ship. He was

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met at the gangway of the latter vessel by Captain John Campbell, her commander, and was at once escorted to the quarter-deck, whither Hawke, attended by his staff, had descended to meet him.

The young officer found himself in the presence of a commanding-looking man well along in years; indeed, he had just turned fifty-four. His huge form was clothed in the recently prescribed blue-and-white uniform, heavily laced, as became his exalted rank, which was that of a full admiral of the blue. He wore no sword, and a blue boat-cloak was carelessly thrown about him, for the morning was chill. A laced cocked hat covered his carefully powdered hair.

He was of middle stature and very stoutly built, inclining, indeed, to fatness, with huge unshapely legs and a stomach which might have done justice to the typical alderman. In spite of his avoirdupois, however, he carried himself easily and well, and these somewhat unpromising externals were forgotten when a glance at his face was had.

His complexion had evidently been fair and bright originally, although the wind and sun had modified its native hue. His skin, too, was singularly smooth and clear for a man who had spent most of his life at sea, and entirely lacked the tough, leathery, weather-beaten aspect which was more consonant with his profession.

His brow was broad and high; his eyes were of deep and intense blue, and set beneath heavy eyebrows. His nose was hooked like an eagle's beak and sharply cut, with thin, well-formed nostrils. Be-

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neath his short upper lip extended a mouth which showed strength and determination in every line. Indeed, high personal dignity, stern impartiality, and inflexible firmness, blended together with indomitable resolution, were apparent in his handsome aristocratic face, even to the most casual observer.

Here was a man who had that indefinable stamp upon his countenance which marked him as a leader of men; who exhibited that aspect which we see presented in all the portraits, imaginary and ideal, of those who in their allotted span and sphere have controlled forces, shaped events, and determined ends in this world's history. The subtle self-confidence, which only real and true greatness renders tolerable, and which always goes before successful achievement, was there too. It was present, in fact, in contagious force. Men looked to him and took courage. In his own confidence, they found assurance to carry out his bold and splendid plans.

Here was a man to be trusted; a kindly man and a just too, in spite of his imperious sternness, and a man great enough to condescend to details which a nature less large would have considered petty and inconsequent. For instance, he was wise enough to look after the welfare of his men, their health, provisions, and other supplies, with the same zeal and persistence that he would pursue an enemy; and he was strong enough to have his way in bringing about their well-being, in spite of knavish contractors and inefficient administrators.

He was a man loved by the upright and feared by the evil. Unsparing in exacting services, gener-

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ous in awarding praise, prompt in rewarding merit, but infinitely stern and unbending toward laziness or weakness, and ruthless in allotting blame to the inefficient, he was a leader whose qualities had attached to his command the best seamen in England.

As Grafton saluted him the admiral recognised the young man who had sailed with him in other days, and his face lighted up with a kindly smile. After ceremoniously acknowledging the salute—for it was a day in which etiquette ruled intercourse, especially in the service—he extended his hand.

“Ah, Grafton,” he said in a deep voice, which well accorded with his stout person, “I am glad to see you again; and let me tell you I never saw a ship brought to in better shape than that one. ’Twas a smart piece of seamanship and handsomely done. I hope our young gentlemen marked it, Campbell. Now, sir, we are brimful of curiosity to know your errand. Eh, captain? My young friends here have been fairly thirsting to hear your tidings. What news?”

“Despatches, Sir Edward, from Vice-Admiral Saunders. Here they are, sir.”

“And how is my old friend?” exclaimed the admiral, taking the packet.

“Well, sir.”

“And that bold fire-eater, young General Wolfe? He was on my ship in the Rochefort expedition, and I——”

“He is dead, sir,” interrupted Grafton sadly.

“Dead! Is it possible! When? How?”

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“The day we beat Montcalm, Sir Edward.”

“Ah, he was a gallant soul! Dead! Poor fellow!”

“Yes, sir. Shot in the final charge that decided the day in our favour, and died on the field almost instantly.”

“And Quebec?”

“Is England’s.”

“Magnificent!” cried Hawke. “How was it?”

In rapid words Grafton rehearsed the story of their great exploits in the New World, the officers crowding as near to the admiral and Grafton as they dared, to listen to the stirring tale.

“Mr. Vernon,” said Hawke to his signal officer, when Grafton had finished his story, “signal to the fleet that Quebec has fallen. ’Twill be news they will appreciate. And add that General Wolfe has been killed. Now I shall go below and look over these despatches. You will find many old friends upon the ship, Grafton, I doubt not,” he added, turning away.

“Beg pardon, Sir Edward, but that’s not all,” said Grafton hurriedly.

The old man stopped short and looked at him in some surprise.

“What, sir! Have you more news than is contained in the despatches?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What is it, pray?”

“I ran over to Brest, sir, thinking to find you——”

The Admiral gets the News

“Ha!” exclaimed the admiral, coming back toward him, deeply interested in this new subject. “What tidings from there?”

“Well, sir, when we saw you weren’t there we ran in close, knowing the French couldn’t get out on account of the strong westerly gale, to find out what we could about their intentions, and—I went ashore—and—happened to be present, unobserved, of course, at a banquet at which Monsieur de Conflans and his officers were the guests.”

“Yes,” said the admiral, his eyes sparkling with excitement, “did you hear anything? Did they say what they intended to do?”

“They are going out, sir.”

“Good! Did you find out when?”

“Yes, sir. I heard de Conflans say, yesterday morning,” answered Grafton, “the wind having shifted; but it changed again, and came from the west once more, so they have scarcely got to sea yet.”

“’Tis news indeed, Grafton, and of the best!” exclaimed Sir Edward, delighted at the prospect.

“I think they will go out at the first practicable moment,” answered Grafton.

“I hope so. Did you learn their destination?”

“Quiberon Bay, sir, where the transports are and d’Aiguillon’s army. After that, Ireland or Scotland or anywhere they can strike.”

“Glorious news, Captain Grafton! Once let us get at them on the high sea and they will strike no place but Davy Jones’ locker, I’ll warrant. Hey, gentlemen? We were forced to raise the blockade

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temporarily by the tremendous westerly gale and ran here for safety. We got under way yesterday morning, but were forced back again. We'll try it again this morning—immediately. We'll make a fair wind of a foul. Let me see, the tide will turn in an hour and we can get off then. Mr. Vernon, recall all boats and signal the captains to come on board the flag-ship at six bells. Captain Campbell, prepare to trip at once. Let me know when you are up and down. We'll have the ships weigh in succession immediately. Meanwhile do you come into my cabin, Grafton; I wish to talk over the matter further with you."

CHAPTER XXIX

CONFLANS IS OUT

WHEN Hawke read his despatches and learned therein of Grafton's services, with Saunders' commendation of them and his recommendation, he forthwith surprised the young American. The former captain of the *Torbay* had died a few days before and no one had yet been designated to command her, fortunately for Grafton, for Hawke immediately appointed him to the ship. To anticipate, it was an appointment which met with the favour of the ship's crew and the junior officers, with many of whom Grafton had previously served. He had been first lieutenant of the *Torbay*, in fact, in other days, and he was therefore thoroughly familiar with the qualities of the ship. He brought no one with him to his new command save Jabez Slocum.

While waiting for the assembling of his captains in the cabin of the *Royal George*, Hawke had sunk the commander in the friend in his intercourse with Grafton. Indeed, he had always taken a fatherly interest in that young sailor. From him he heard again, and at full length now, the details of that marvellous Quebec campaign. From him he also

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learned the story of his romantic love affair. He entered with the zest of a boy into the spirit of the hardy and daring ascent of the dark tower and the exciting adventures which followed upon it.

"My lad," he exclaimed at last, "if your wife is on the French fleet you shall have her, by Heaven, if we have to sink every ship in the squadron until we get her!"

"I have no doubt that she will be with them, admiral," answered Grafton. "If I know the Marquis de Chabot-Rohan, he is not a man to say things and then fail to do them. I imagine she will be on *Le Thésée*. That is the ship of the Comte de Kersaint, who was betrothed to her, you know, before I—married her."

He was as yet so little accustomed to his new relationship that he stumbled over the significant word.

"Yes," said the admiral, "I have heard that he is one of the best seamen and officers in the French navy."

"'Tis true, sir. I can bear testimony to it. He captured me in the *Boxer* with this same ship five years ago, and I got to know him then. He knew my father, too, and once fought him. The *Renomé* and the *Shirley*, you know. He's a fighter. But if I can get alongside of him with the old *Torbay*, sir, I think we can show him a thing or two."

"I know you can," added Hawke, smiling, "and I shall do my best to help you and give you a chance. As soon as we get out of the channel we'll spread

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apart. I have twenty-three ships of the line and two frigates here, and we ought to cover miles of the horizon. As the wind is from the eastward this morning, Conflans will probably get away at the same time we do. I intend to push hard for Belleisle. I can't afford to wait for Saunders, though 'tis a generous offer he makes me. By the way," he added, as a sudden thought struck him, "I must send a frigate out at once to warn Duff. There is a squadron of one capital and four fifty-gun ships, besides some frigates, down there. I hope 'tis not too late."

As the admiral reached over to strike a bell on the table, Grafton interrupted him.

"Beg pardon, Sir Edward," he exclaimed, "I've already taken the liberty of doing that."

"You have!" exclaimed the admiral in astonishment. "When? How?"

"Why, sir, yesterday afternoon we overhauled the frigate Vengeance, Captain Nightingale, and I told him what I had learned, and at my suggestion he agreed to beat down for Quiberon and warn Commodore Duff. I was to come on here and tell you, and as we were sure as to your action, Nightingale was to tell Duff that you'd be hard on the heels of Monsieur de Conflans."

"You have done well, exceedingly well, young man."

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir," murmured Grafton. "Trained in your own school, sir, you know."

"Well, you've been an apt pupil, Grafton, and I'm proud of you. If you do as well with the Tor-

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bay you'll have a flag before you know it. But I will send a second messenger to make sure."

The admiral struck the bell on the table, which summoned an orderly.

"My compliments to Captain Campbell and ask him to summon Captain Harrison of the Venus here at once," he said. "No, don't go, Grafton, I wish to go over this matter with you again."

The next few moments the two men spent in earnest conversation. Grafton told again and again what he had learned in the tower, and Hawke stored away the details in his capacious memory. In a short time Captain Harrison appeared in the cabin.

"Ah, Harrison, allow me to make you acquainted with Captain Grafton, who is just in from Quebec with glorious news!"

"Glad to see you, Captain Grafton," answered Harrison. "The tidings you brought are indeed splendid. The whole fleet is alive with the good news. You can hear them cheering everywhere, Sir Edward."

"Grafton has also informed me that the French are going out. They propose to make Quiberon Bay at once, gobble up Duff's squadron, embark their troops, and then off for Ireland or Scotland. We must stop that."

"Yes, sir," answered Harrison promptly. "But do you know, Sir Edward, everybody is rather glad they're off. We'd like nothing better than a chance at them, and after the weary months of waiting off the harbour mouth anything is welcome. We rejoice over——"

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The officer stopped, abashed under Hawke's cold glance at him, on account of the indiscreet comments into which his enthusiasm had betrayed him. The admiral looked at him sternly for a moment, as if to reprove him, and then broke into laughter, to Harrison's great relief.

"Egad!" he said, "I believe I am glad of it too, Harrison. I want nothing better than a chance at them myself. Blockading is weary work. Well, perhaps we may get at them now. By the way, is the *Venus* ready to sail?"

"On the instant, sir," returned the other promptly. "I'd like to see the vessel in your command that wasn't ready for anything on the instant," he added under his breath; not so low, however, but the admiral heard him, although he made no comment except to smile at this testimony to the high standard of efficiency he maintained in his fleet.

"Well, sir, you will weigh anchor at once and make the best of your way to Quiberon. *Nightingale*, in the *Vengeance*, is already on the way there with a warning, but two messengers are better than one; we'll try and make it certain. Don't spare anything. You've a swift ship and you ought to pass Brest before the French get fairly out of it. They are a lubberly lot, and it will take time for them to get to sea. Give *Ushant* a wide berth too. Tell *Duff* to get to sea at once and that I am coming. Don't get captured!"

"No, sir," answered the young captain, fairly dancing out of the room in his delight.

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“ May I ask another favour, Sir Edward?” asked Grafton, as Harrison left the room.

“ What!” exclaimed Hawke, “ are you not satisfied with the Torbay?”

“ Yes, more than satisfied, but my first lieutenant on the Maidstone is a first-class fellow, and——”

“ He may have the frigate,” answered Hawke. “ Do you go over there and get your things and shift them to the Torbay. Tell him that I shall want him to keep ahead of the fleet and to starboard just within signaling distance. The Coventry will be in the same position to larboard. I want a bright lookout kept for Conflans too.”

Hawke had caused the news of the prospective sailing of the French fleet to be sent through his own fleet, and at nine o'clock, having completed his own preparations, the captains, having been duly summoned by signal in accordance with his previous orders, repaired to the flag-ship.

They at once reported to him below in his cabin. The little group of men completely filled the great cabin. They were a rare body of officers, most of them trained by Hawke himself in his own school. Some of them had been with him in that brilliant battle twelve years before in which he had swept down in force and smashed the gallant *L'Étendue* in the very seas in which he was about to attempt to crush Conflans. All of them had participated with him in the rigours of the long blockade of Brest he had so vigorously maintained since early in the present year.

Among them were men like Campbell, Speke,

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Denis, Rowley, O'Brien, Baird, Stanhope, Storr, and Bentley, who were to win an immortal name in the day of battle approaching. No less than six of them were of noble birth, and all were men of influence and station, except Campbell, whose well-known worth more than counterbalanced the then great disadvantage of humble birth and station under which he laboured. With them, too, was the great and gallant Keppel, afterward so unfortunate in his battle with d'Orvilliers; and another whose name was destined to be scarcely less famous than that of Hawke himself, Richard, Viscount Howe, then commanding the *Magnanime*. Tall, lean, swarthy of visage, which gave him the sobriquet of "Black Dick," he put in practice the lessons he had learned under Hawke, on the "glorious first of June," thirty-five years later, when, with an inferior force, he utterly defeated Villaret-Joyeuse.

Among such a galaxy of nautical stars Grafton kept himself modestly in the background; but with seamanlike frankness and generosity when they heard of his exploits, they extended to him a hearty welcome and forced him in the first rank with genuine and hearty admiration. He, too, was to show himself worthy of the honours and responsibilities which were heaped upon him—a fit member of that gallant band.

"Gentlemen, I am glad to see you," said Hawke affectionately, scanning the faces of the men about him, some seated on chairs, others on transoms, or leaning against the bulkheads, or across the table before him. "Captain Grafton, whom I have ap-

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pointed to the Torbay on account of his distinguished services at the taking of Quebec, informs me that the fleet of de Conflans, which has been re-enforced by the squadron of de Bompert, is about to sail for Quiberon. We will at once go in pursuit of them. The Vengeance is gone on ahead to carry the news, and I have despatched Harrison, in the Venus, to warn Duff, and I trust one of them at least will succeed in getting there in time. If not——”

“Well, I know Duff,” broke in Vice-Admiral Hardy, the second in command and a most distinguished officer, “he will make a good fight of it, although, of course, he has no chance with his fifty-gun ships; yet I’ll wager Monsieur de Conflans will know that he’s had a fight on his hands before he takes them.”

“Quite so,” answered Hawke coolly, “and perhaps it may be just as well anyway they should meet, because Duff would probably be able to occupy him, between chasing and fighting, until we get hold of him. Now, as to our plan of battle,” said the admiral, looking about his cabin.

It was a day when stern adherence to prescribed rules was invariably insisted upon, and many a gallant sailor had ruined a reputation and lost a battle since he could not seize a golden opportunity for a decisive step because the necessary manœuvre was not laid down in the text-books. Hawke was not that kind of a man. They waited for him interestedly—they knew him.

“Gentlemen,” he said at last, “I propose to go

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at them whenever we see them and wherever we find them. We'll attack them in the old way and make downright work of them, as we did with L'Étendue, and every man will pitch in. I want no court-martials on this occasion. The Royal George will lead, but if any of the rest of you find you have the heels of her you may go ahead—if you can. I can trust you, I am sure. I know you are all right. I have watched you closely in the hard cruising of the past eight months in the blockade on a lee-shore, the hardest thing a sailor can do. I know the stuff that is in you, and I expect you to show it forth. No captain can do wrong if he lays his ship alongside an enemy and sticks to her until the ship's his. If de Conflans, who ought to have at least twenty ships of the line, will wait for us we will approach him with scientific precision. If he does not, we will go at him pell-mell, and may the best ship win!"

"Egad, sir," cried Howe, who, because he was a viscount, possibly felt himself entitled to speak before the others, it being a day when rank was written with a big R, and a title meant a great deal even in the naval service—"egad, sir, we'll follow you into hell itself!"

"We will!"

"We will!" cried one and another.

"I know you will. However, I trust I'm not going that way. Now, as to the order of sailing. The Royal George will lead. The Torbay will follow at a distance of perhaps half a league, and the other ships in the prescribed order will keep the same dis-

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tance. By this means, with the frigates, we cover something like fifteen leagues and make the chances of our sighting the French fleet almost certain, and yet we'll be within easy signaling distance, so that we can collect the ships when we meet them. I want every ship in readiness for instant action. Keep a bright lookout at the mastheads to sweep the sea in every direction. I intend to head now for Belleisle as straight as the wind will let us go, but should the course be changed it will be signaled to you from the flagship. Now, gentlemen, I think the chance for which we have been hoping and praying is before us. You know how necessary for England is a victory at this moment. We are the sole fleet left to guard the shores of the land we love. Should Conflans get away or beat us——”

“He'll never do that same,” cried Denis of the Dorsetshire.

“There would be nothing,” continued Hawke, “to prevent him from landing his army on our shores. Our King, our country, and our homes; the children, our wives, mothers, sweethearts, the women of England, are behind us, gentlemen; we fight for them. Let that thought animate us to do our duty. That's all. And now, before you go, I would take each one of you by the hand and commend you and us all to that Higher Power which rules on both land and sea. I have confidence in you.”

“And we have confidence in you, sir,” answered Keppel for the rest, springing forward and wringing his superior's hand.

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“ Three cheers for Sir Ed’ard! ” cried Stanhope, and the little room was filled with hurrahs.

Exactly at six bells—for old John Campbell, Hawke’s flag-captain, prided himself upon the scrupulous accuracy of his movements—the Royal George, with her anchors swinging at the bow, gathered way. The wind was coming from the south-eastward and increasing in force, and she had to beat out of the harbour. Far ahead of her to starboard was the Maidstone; the other way, to larboard, was the frigate Coventry.

With ill-concealed impatience Grafton waited in the Torbay, already hove short, until he judged the Royal George had attained the required distance ahead, and then he, too, gave the signal to trip. The men sprang to the capstan bars; the anchor was jerked from its oozy bed with a celerity like that exhibited by a crew when they weigh the anchor of a ship that is homeward bound from a long cruise.

Sail after sail was quickly spread on the old seventy-four by her eager men, and she ratched out of the harbour on the port tack in the wake of the Royal George, now far ahead and going fast. The wind was coming stronger, and as the great ship swept along she heeled to the breeze and surged rapidly away to the south-west. The others weighed in succession in accordance with their orders. In a few hours the whole fleet would be at sea following in the wake of their gallant leader.

Early that day the sloop-of-war Gibraltar, twenty-eight, Captain William McCleverty, hove in sight, and reported to Hawke that the Brest fleet

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had indeed sailed. They had been seen that morning about twenty-four leagues north-west of Belleisle steering toward the south-east. They were carrying sail hard and seemed to be in a hurry.

The first and only signal hoisted that day was then thrown from the mizzen royal masthead of the admiral's ship. It was repeated from ship to ship and was everywhere greeted with cheers, and yet the flags composing it spelled but three short words:

“Conflans is out!”

CHAPTER XXX

THE ALARM IN THE MORNING

AT seven o'clock in the morning of the twentieth of November, 1759, the ships of the little squadron of Commodore Duff lay straining at their anchors in Quiberon Bay. The squadron was composed of the old line-of-battle-ship *Belliqueux*, the fifty-gun ships *Rochester* (flag), *Falkland*, *Chatham*, and *Portland*, and the frigates *Minerva* and *Sapphire*, each thirty-twos. Owing to the lateness of the season it was not yet dawn, although the hammocks had been piped up and one watch was already at breakfast. The bay and the ships were as calm and peaceful, apparently, as they had been at any time during the weary months of the blockade with which Duff, under Hawke's orders, had shut in the transports of Belloc and d'Aiguillon and the selected force assembled under their orders for the descent upon England.

The commander was still asleep in the cabin of the *Rochester* when the report of a heavy gun far to seaward attracted the attention of the officer of the watch. Gun-firing was common enough along the shore, where the camps of the enemy lay, but it was rare indeed that the sound of it came from the

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open ocean to the westward. Of so much importance did the officer conceive the incident to be, that he immediately despatched a midshipman to apprise the commodore of the fact.

Duff sprang from his berth, and, realizing the ominous significance of the occurrence, dragged on a few clothes and ran to the deck. As he dressed, the commodore heard the firing, which had been repeated again and again. It was evident from the regularity of the discharge that it came from a single ship. The darkness prevented them from discovering what ship it was, though from the steadily increasing volume of sound the vessel was rapidly coming in. Indeed, from the flashes of light which marked the several discharges they judged that she must be even now approaching the Cardinals.

Duff and his officers on deck peered eagerly to seaward, waiting in anxious expectation for the advent of the stranger. Meanwhile, a preparatory signal, which bade the other ships get in readiness to weigh anchor, was made by means of lanterns from the Rochester. Quick answers showed that the officers of the little squadron were also awake to the incident and already on the alert. It was evident to every one that the sound could only have been caused by a ship signaling. Urgent danger alone would account for the continuous discharges. Signals to an English squadron would only be made by an English ship. They could only mean that a French fleet was making for the harbour.

Duff uneasily waited a few moments longer, and presently, reasoning the affair out, determined to get

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to sea at once. He realized that it was more than probable that the strong westerly gales which had prevailed during the past week had forced Hawke to raise the blockade, and that the Brest fleet had got out a few days before when the gale had abated, before the English ships could get back to their station. Naturally their destination would be Quiberon. If he were caught in the confines of the little bay he would be lost. Out at sea he could at least make a run for it. There was, of course, a chance—nay, more than a chance, a certainty—that old Hawke would be hard on the heels of the French, who would be in such force that resistance on the part of Duff's little squadron would be madness.

Having at last made up his mind, he acted with the promptness of a sailor. It were better to lose no time, and the ships of his squadron were signaled to put to sea immediately. By their commander's direction, they did not even wait to weigh anchor, but cut cables as fast as sail could be made, and, favoured by a strong easterly breeze, rushed for the narrow entrance of the bay. The *Belliqueux*, which happened to lie farthest out, was the first to get under way. She was followed by the other ships in quick succession.

Just as they reached the pass between the Cardinals and the reefs of *Le Four* they drew within signal distance of the incoming ship. It was gray morning now, and from the deck of the *Rochester* they could make out her number by the aid of their glasses.

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“ ‘The Vengeance, Captain Nightingale,’ ” read the signal officer who stood at Duff’s side.

“ Show the answering pennants smartly, sir.”

“ Ay, ay, sir.”

As soon as it was discovered on the Vengeance another set of signals was displayed.

“ ‘The French are out. Raise the blockade,’ ” read the signal officer again.

“ Ah,” said Duff, “ I thought so! We were none too soon, then. Have you answered them? ”

“ Yes, sir, and there goes out another signal.”

“ What is it? ”

“ ‘Hawke is coming!’ ” cried the officer triumphantly.

“ Of course, I expected nothing else,” said Duff, smiling with satisfaction. “ Now signal the Vengeance to follow the squadron, and then direct the ships to follow the Belliqueux. Signal her to round the Cardinals and beat up to the nor’west between Haëdik and Belleisle.”

The stout ships were by this time covered with canvas and were rushing through the water at a great rate, the Belliqueux, which was much the best sailer, being far in the lead. In fact, she had already rounded the Cardinals, and with her starboard tacks aboard was well within the dangerous pass between the two islands, when the wind, which had been northerly, suddenly shifted to the westward. This was most unfortunate.

The distance the first ship had gained would probably enable her to beat through the pass and round Belleisle, in spite of the dangerous shoals,

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known as the Bancs de Taillefer, in her path. But for the other ships it would be impracticable now to attempt the pass. In that way lay safety, everywhere else danger; but there was no help for it.

Duff gathered his fifty-gun ships and frigates around him by signal, leaving the *Belliqueux* to her own devices, and then hauled his wind and bore away to the southward under a great press of canvas. But as the breeze was coming stronger every moment, he presently stripped the light sails from his ships, and as the force of the wind increased he was finally compelled to take in the topgallant-sails, and after reefing his topsails set the maintopgallant-sail above them. At this juncture the *Venus* joined the flying squadron. Harrison had driven her terrifically, and even now had his three topgallant-sails set; his little ship was pitching and tossing tremendously. The small signal flags, whipping out in the fierce wind, spelled an ominous message: "The French are close behind." Harrison had done nobly. He fell in with the rest of the fleeing ships.

Day broke gray and stormy. The clouds were piled up on the horizon and overhead in threatening masses. The wind came in ever more and more fierce squalls from the north-west, drawing gradually toward the west. Before it was fairly day the look-outs on the maintopgallant-yard of the *Rochester*, which, with the *Chatham*, were far in the rear of the other vessels on account of their slow speed, discovered a sail a little to the north and far to windward. There was a slight mist on the ocean in that quarter, and it was not for some time after the day

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dawned that they discovered that it was the great French fleet.

The English had been warned none too soon. Another hour and they would have been caught in the harbour. The easterly gales, which had delayed Hawke, had swept de Conflans far to sea as well and proved Duff's salvation. The two observers on the different squadrons were cognizant of each other's proximity at the same instant, for the French, who had been jogging along under easy sail in the heavy wind, at once spread more canvas until they were under the same sail as the English squadron. Duff instantly divided his squadron, hoping to part the French fleet in pursuit. Two of the fifty-gun ships and two frigates squared away before the wind and ran toward the shore, inclining to the south-east, and hoping, perhaps, to decoy the French to chase past the entrance of the bay and thus keep them out at sea. The others, including the commodore himself, held steadily on to the south-west, with their starboard tacks aboard and every bowline triced out until they almost ripped the bolt-ropes from the sails.

Presently one ship of the line hauled her wind and came booming along in the wake of the Rochester. The other French ships kept on after the group fleeing toward the shore. In a few moments, however, signals were broken out on the French flagship, and in obedience thereto the rear division of six magnificent ships of the line came up to the wind on the starboard tack and also headed for Duff, while the remaining French ships, of which the Eng-

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lish counted fourteen, and several frigates, held on as before. The advancing squadron of the French was composed of good goers, and it was soon found they had the heels of the English ships.

Duff had been elated when he found himself pursued by a single ship of the line. He counted upon easily disposing of her with the Chatham and the Rochester, but when seven bore down upon him the situation was altered. Any hope of successful resistance vanished. Nevertheless he determined to make a fight for it—a bold resolution indeed. Neglecting no opportunity of increasing his speed meanwhile, the men were sent to their quarters, the guns cast loose and provided, and every preparation made for action.

The news which Nightingale had brought, that Hawke was on the heels of the French, was reassuring, and remembering Hawke's well-known characteristics, it was certain that he would not be far away. Perhaps they might see him at any moment. The commodore sent lookouts to the topgallant-yards at once in the hope that they might detect the English fleet.

Duff realized that if he were overhauled it was his business to fight his own ships until they sunk beneath him, so that he might thereby detain and occupy the enemy to give their pursuers time to catch up with them.

Quiberon Bay, with all its dangers to the English, lay immediately before the French fleet with the wind blowing fair for them to make the entrance. No one could tell what de Conflans' intentions were.

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He might decide to stay outside and fight, or he might design to run into the bay and wait. If he ran and gained the bay it would be very difficult for Hawke to force a combat with him except under circumstances of great disadvantage. If Duff could detain Conflans outside, either by drawing him after the ships he was chasing, or by fighting him with his own until Hawke came up, he could be of great service to the admiral.

His duty was plain, yet he and his men, who already realized the situation, looked forward to the approaching conflict with feelings of deep apprehension, which not even their grim determination could remove. They held on desperately, however, and the French rear division drew nearer every moment.

"Aloft there!" at last called out the commodore. "Do you see anything aft or to windward?"

"No, sir," answered the man on the maintop-gallant-yard.

"Go higher!" shouted Duff, "get on the main-royal-yard and take a long look."

"Ay, ay, sir!" cried the man, shinning up the backstays until he presently reached the royal yard.

He stepped on it fearlessly, and twining his arm around the royal mast looked over to windward. Everybody had heard the direction, and all waited impatiently for the report.

"Well?" cried the commodore sharply at last; but before he could finish the question the man screamed out:

"Sail ho!"

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“What is it?” he called. “Can you make it out?”

“Looks like a heavy ship, sir, over to win’ard an’ comin’ down fast, an’ there’s more on ’em, sir! I can see two—three——”

“Pray God it may be Hawke!” said Duff to his first lieutenant. “The French are fearfully near. Here, Mr. Coventry,” he added, turning to a young passed midshipman, “take the glass and skip up to the mainroyal-yard and see what you can make of them. Lively, sir!”

Presently the young officer joined the lookout on his dizzy perch. Steadying the glass against the mast he, too, looked long at the approaching strangers, which the strong gale was driving nearer every moment.

“’Tis a large fleet, sir,” he called down from his position, “ships of the line, a dozen sail and more. English ships, sir.”

“That will be Sir Edward without a doubt!” cried Duff. “Stay where you are, Mr. Coventry, and report what you see. Gentlemen, our fleet is there. We will run no longer. Signal to the Chatham to tack at once. Ready about! Stations for stays!”

His words were heard all over the ship. The men leaped to their stations, cheering madly as the ship swept into the wind and ran off on the port tack toward the approaching French advance, followed by the Chatham. When they realized their plucky commodore intended to fight his huge antagonists the cheers redoubled in volume, and the excitement

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finally terminated in a characteristic piece of sea bravado and defiance. The men leaped on the rail of the Rochester and threw their caps overboard at the oncoming Frenchmen.

Meanwhile the approaching English ships had been discovered by the French commander. A gun boomed out faintly from the flagship of de Conflans, *Le Soleil Royal*. Signals were flying from the mizzenroyal-mast of the ship. In obedience thereto, the rear division, which was now almost within gunshot of Duff's squadron, wore and ran off on the other tack.

Conflans was assembling his ships. What was he about to do—fight, or fly?

CHAPTER XXXI

THE FRENCH WAIT—BREAK—FLY

AT half after eight in the morning of the same day, the great fleet of the English, which had been driven far over to the westward of their destination by the strong south-easterly winds and gales which had prevailed, had arrived at a point about thirteen leagues due west of Belleisle. During the night, fortunately, the wind had shifted and was now coming strong from the north-west, changing to the west-north-west. The fleet was headed to the east for Belleisle.

The order of sailing had been altered soon after the fleet had cleared the English Channel. In order to be within easy signaling distance from both ends of the line, the Royal George had been placed in the centre of the great fleet. Lord Howe, in the *Magnanime*, a splendid ship recently captured from the French, was far to the north-east of the flag-ship, leading the van to port. Vice-Admiral Hardy, in the *Union*, a noble three-decker of ninety guns, brought up the rear of his division, and was the starboard and rearmost ship, bearing south-west from the centre. Next to the *Magnanime*, in order, were the other ships of the line, the *Warspite*, *Dorsetshire*, *Monta-*

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gu, Torbay, Swiftsure, Resolution, Defiance, Revenge, and Royal George, with the Duke, Namur, Mars, Hero, Beaufort, Chichester, Temple, Kingston, Burford, Hercules, Dunkirk, Intrepid, and the Union last, in the rear of Hawke. Far in advance of the fleet, on either side, were the frigates Coventry and the Maidstone, keeping close watch ahead.

All the ships were under easy sail, jogging along to the eastward, keeping a bright lookout in all directions for a sight of the enemy. In order to spread a broad clew, the several ships were widely separated, covering many miles of sea thereby. Having arrived near where he hoped to meet de Conflans, Hawke had no further necessity for swift movement. He was waiting now and was ready to strike.

As day broke the admiral made the signal for the Magnanime and the two frigates to press in toward the shore. The vessels designated clapped on sail, and, like released hounds, sprang away from the fleet, which still continued moving easily along in the rear of them. At one bell, or half after eight in the morning, a gun was fired from the Maidstone, which led the trio, and at the same time she let fly her topgallant sheets, which was the agreed signal that the enemy was in sight.

Hawke at once flung out signal to form line abreast in order to draw his scattered fleet in position for action. Then, in spite of the wind, which was now blowing stronger and increasing, he shook the reefs out of his topsails and set the topgallant-sails—a manœuvre which was emulated by the other

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ships immediately—and changed the course to head direct for the fleet which had been sighted. The ships of the fleet at the time were in a sort of irregular bow-and-quarter line—which a soldier would have described as *en échelon*—with the Magnanime in the lead, Hawke in the middle, the van division to windward nearest the shore and the enemy, and the remaining division far astern of the flagship and to leeward.

Presently, as the morning wore on, the French fleet came in sight from the other ships of the English fleet. Twenty-one ships of the line the watchers counted, with three flag officers, a splendid force indeed. Although Hawke had twenty-three capital ships, besides Duff's four fifty-gun ships, the odds against the French were not overwhelmingly great; not too heavy, at any rate, for a brave commander to risk an action with abundant chances of victory. A long distance still separated the two fleets, however, and even with the most earnest will on both sides they could not join battle for some time.

Until it was decided what the intentions of de Conflans were there was nothing for Hawke to do but hold on; trusting that by redoubled efforts and by carrying a press of sail, which nothing but the urgency of the situation would have warranted, the rear ships might close with the other division in time to join in the battle. The Englishman also hoped that de Conflans would wait for them. With a seaman's ready eye Hawke had at once realized that de Conflans was chasing Duff's squadron. In fact, as they drew nearer they saw the recall of the

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French rear divisions and Duff's prompt and daring manoeuvre afterward.

"He's going to make a run for it!" said Hawke, running the tubes of his glass together and laying it down on the signal chest in much disgust, as he saw the French rear division, which was nearest him, wear away from the approaching English ships. "Look at Duff, Campbell," he continued; "by Heaven, he's tacking toward the French! He's about to engage! 'Tis madness! Mr. Vernon, signal him to join the fleet immediately."

"I'm no thinkin' the French'll hae muckle stomach for a fight, Sir Ed'ard," answered the old Scotsman, a worthy but eccentric officer of humble birth, who had first entered the service before the mast and had attained his present rank by sheer merit alone. He was, by virtue of his command of the Royal George, the flag captain. "Eight months shut up in a harbour by a blockade will no gie a mon muckle heart for a—— My certie!" he cried, "look at that, noo! I've been doin' them an injustice!"

"What's he up to, I wonder?" exclaimed the admiral, seizing his glass once more and staring at the French fleet. "Egad! He's hauling his wind, I believe! They are trying to form line of battle. What a ragged line! He has more pluck than I gave him credit for."

"An' a lubberly lot o' seamen, too," continued Campbell, surveying them critically.

"Ay, if yon's any sign of their ability, once let us get in touch with them, and—but thank Heaven,

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they fight better than they sail. When we overhaul them we'll have our hands full."

"You will be waitin' for the rear division, I'm thinkin', Sir Ed'ard, if the French admiral shows signs of waitin' for us?"

"What's that, Campbell? I'm surprised!"

"Now that he's makin' preparations to fight proper like, you'll approach him in a seamanlike an' scienteefic manner——"

"I'll wait for nothing," said Hawke decisively. "I've no confidence whatever that they will remain where they are very long, and I don't intend to lose any chances by waiting for anybody. Gad, I wish I'd stayed at the other end of the line! Look at the *Magnanime* now, and the *Warspite* and the *Torbay*. We are so far astern and to leeward of them all."

"True, Sir Ed'ard, but the most of the fleet is worse off than we are, remember, an' if you intend to attack the whole French fleet wi' the van ships an' the *Royal George* we'll hae opportunity an' time to get a bellyful o' fightin' before we are through this day."

"'Twouldn't do to set the royals, I suppose?"

"If you want to carry away the royal masts before the French get a shot at us 'twill be the easiest way, Sir Ed'ard. Set the royals, sir! Losh me! I'm thinkin' we'll hae to take in the to'gallant-sails."

"Let them be!" cried Hawke, after a quick glance aloft. "They'll stand it."

"Verra well, sir," answered the Scotsman phlegmatically, "you are in command."

"Yes, and a good thing for you, too. If I were

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not here," answered Hawke, who knew the man thoroughly, "you'd have had the royals on her yourself, John Campbell. I know you better than you do yourself."

The captain smiled deprecatingly and waved his hand in denial, but did not presume to contradict the admiral, nor indeed did he wish to.

The ships were swaying and tossing tremendously now, rolling and heaving until they buried their lee-chains under water again and again in the huge green waves of the heavy sea. The decks were at such a slant that only the most experienced seamen could keep their feet. Yet Hawke, in spite of his unwieldiness, made no difficulty about it, standing over to windward leaning by the rail, watching the English ships struggling skilfully in the huge waves to get into some kind of line. The wind was coming over the quarter, the best point of sailing for most of the British ships, and, going at a great pace, they were rapidly drawing nearer to the enemy.

An ominous yet magnificent picture they must have presented to the waiting Conflans as they dove into and through the huge seas, rocking and pitching irresistibly onward. The odds, he knew, were against him. In the number of ships the English outclassed him by two. In the weight of tonnage and gun power there was a greater inequality, and, what was more serious—nay, decisive—in the *personnel* of the two fleets a vast difference. Still, with other things equal, victories had been won, decisive victories, too, against such odds of force. Hawke, for instance, would not have hesitated a second to

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engage under such circumstances if he had been in de Conflans' place—and without doubt he would have won too!

Those weather-beaten old monsters who had clung to the blockade in the wild weather of the Bay of Biscay were handled by men who knew their ships from truck to keelson, from yard-arm to yard-arm; men who could get out of them all that mortal men could wrest from rope, and canvas, and timber. Some of de Conflans' ships were manned by landsmen, and several of them commanded by officers whose theoretical knowledge was greatly in excess of their practical experience. Strange as it may seem, many of the junior French officers were sea-sick at the time.

As the English ships came nearer, apparently rising in ever-increasing number and size, out of the gray west on that raw morning, perhaps the heart of the French commander gave way. At any rate, he determined upon another plan. A scheme occurred to him which was not lacking in ingenuity and which presented some chances of success, although certainly it was not remarkable either for boldness or hardihood.

The Bay of Quiberon is one of the most difficult and dangerous of access in the world. From Morbihan in Brittany a long, narrow, rocky peninsula, Presqu'île de Quiberon, extends far to the southward, and with Belleisle and the rocky islands of Houat and Haëdik incloses the greater part of the bay to which the peninsula gives a name. Off the lower island, Haëdik, a series of dangerous reefs

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known as the Cardinals, Les Petits et Les Grands Cardinaux, extends to the south-east, the only practicable channel leading into the bay being by the side of these jagged needles of the sea. Close to the point of Croisic, on the mainland to the eastward, there is a narrow channel which is terminated by the deadly reefs of Le Four bank, a large and treacherous shoal.

Between the Cardinals and Le Four bank, for a distance of several miles, extends the entrance to the bay. This entrance is further complicated by hidden shoals and numerous reefs, upon which the rude tempests, so frequent in the Bay of Biscay, drive the waves with resistless force. The Bay of Biscay, on account of the peculiar configuration of the surrounding *terrein*, and by its location as well, is one of the most restless, stormy, and difficult waters upon the globe. Within the Bay of Quiberon there is good harbourage, with sufficient accommodation for all the squadrons of the world, although pilotage is necessary everywhere on account of the erratic grouping of the shoals and reefs.

As the English fleet drew nearer, de Conflans, who was, of course, provided with capable pilots, determined to break his line of battle and seek refuge in the bay. If Hawke tried to follow him—which he thought unlikely under such conditions of wind and weather—as the English were without local pilots they would probably be entangled in the dangerous waters and wrecked on the shoals and reefs.

If the English succeeded in getting into the bay then, or after, he intended to place his fleet in a safe

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position under the lee of the islands and the peninsula, which would compel Hawke to attack him in succession ship by ship, and from the leeward; a serious disadvantage to the English, which would permit the French to crush the several ships as they came in and on. It was a pretty idea, though not overdaring, but it neglected to take into account the qualities of Hawke. When they turned tail in the presence of such a captain, though they knew it not, they were doomed. To fly was destruction; their only salvation was to fight. De Conflans did not see this, so when he thought his motions led to safety, they only wrought his undoing. However, he was doomed anyway, opposed by such a commander as the English admiral.

As they drew nearer, the watching Englishmen saw another set of signals suddenly flung to the gale, and immediately thereafter the French ships turned sharply and cracked on sail, running straight for the bay mouth, then about a dozen miles distant under their lee. As is always the case in retreat, the formation was lost. The line had been poorly formed at best, and the van division, under de Beaufremont, got away first and ran off under all practicable sail toward Croisic and Le Four. De Conflans led the centre division for the Cardinals, followed at some little distance by the rear division of the Count du Verger, who covered the retreat in his flag-ship, the *Formidable*, a noble vessel of eighty guns.

It was nearly eleven o'clock in the morning by this time. All the ships of both fleets were well to the south of Belleisle now.

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“I thought so,” said Hawke to old Campbell, in deep disappointment, as he saw his enemies flying before him, “you were right. There they go off, you see. The cowards! Why couldn’t they have stayed here and given us a decent chance at them? They’re making for Quiberon, of course.”

“You’ll be givin’ it up, noo, I’m thinkin’, Sir Ed’ard,” remarked Campbell, his voice full of anxiety lest his question should be answered in the affirmative.

“Certainly not. Wherever they go I mean to follow. Mr. Vernon,” he said, turning to his signal officer, “direct the Magnanime and the van division to draw in line ahead and intercept the enemy. Then throw out signals for a general chase. We’ll go at them as we can. And hark ye, Campbell, if you don’t get this ship up into the line so that I can take part with the rest in spite of the long start they’ve had, by gad, old man, you shall be broken!”

Hawke shook his finger at the Scotsman.

“Never fear, sir,” said the old man imperturbably. “I’m thinkin’ when the battle joins the old Geordie ’ll be there.”

“There goes the Magnanime! What a splendid fellow is Howe!” remarked the admiral, smiling at his cool subordinate, as they saw the Magnanime spread more sail, leave the line, and dart ahead.

“Ay, sir, an’ there she’s followed by the Torbay an’ the Warspite, an’ a’ the ithers.”

“I wish I had remained in the lead myself, or that I were in the Magnanime now.”

“Rest easy, Sir Ed’ard, we’ll be there in time.

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Now, my men," said old Campbell, walking to the break of the poop and not making his communication through his executive officer as usual, "I want you to get an extra pull on all the halliards an' haul out the sheets as well. Rig wheeps and wet down the sails too. Send the best men in the ship to the wheel, Mr. Botterel," he continued to his executive officer; "those fellows yonder hae the start of us, but we winna let them be too far ahead when the battle is joined."

"Signal the squadron to send the men to dinner, Mr. Vernon, at eight bells; they will fight better on a full stomach and a tot of grog. I shall be back presently," continued Hawke, turning to his cabin.

CHAPTER XXXII

A STERN CHASE ON A LEE-SHORE

IT was nearly twelve o'clock, noon, when Hawke went below. He snatched a hasty luncheon in his cabin, and then proceeded to make those few personal preparations for battle which his habit and experience dictated. His private affairs had been placed in order before he had assumed his present command, and they therefore required no attention now. His beloved wife had died some time before, and there were no letters to be written. Still, there were some things to be done.

He first put on his dress uniform of blue, heavily laced with gold and trimmed with silver and white, and fastened with gold buttons each having a rose on them, and with his Star of the Bath blazing upon his left breast. As was the custom of many of the captains of that day, he considered it a point of honour to fight in full dress. The wide cuffs of the coat permitted a view of the full white kersey sleeve edged with Flemish lace which fell over his hands, singularly smooth and well-shaped for a sailor. At his throat he wore a jabot, or fall, of similar lace, which with his ruffled shirt appeared in the opening of his high-buttoned white waistcoat. Tight-fitting

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white breeches, silk stockings, and buckled shoes completed his attire. His valet carefully powdered his hair and brought him his sword, a handsome, richly jewelled weapon, which he belted around his waist.

Having completed his toilet, he withdrew into his inner cabin, as was his custom in similar and serious emergencies, and passed a few moments in reverent communication with his Maker. Hearty and fervent were the prayers of this great captain, who was noted for his clean living and simple faith, in a day when such things were not common—if they ever are—especially among men of the sword. Then, with a curious mixture of reliance upon his own judgment and capacity, and trust in that Father to whom he had appealed, he re-entered his cabin, wrapped himself in his heavy boat-cloak, for the wind was cold, so late was the season, donned his laced cocked hat with its black cockade rising from it, and went on the deck once more.

Eight bells had struck and the watch off were still at dinner. Captain Campbell, who rather prided himself upon his fore-castle origin, had not left the deck. He was standing on the weather side of the ship at the break of the poop leaning against a gun, eating hardtack and corned beef, like a common sailor, from a tray held by his cabin-boy. The rude fare was sweetened by draughts of Scotch whisky and water—very little water, by the way—and Captain Campbell's rather sparing use of the delectable combination in no wise indicated the strength of his attachment for it.

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Sailor-like, Hawke's first glance was sent to windward. The weather was just about what it had been—gloomy, overcast, threatening, a tempest apparently brewing beneath the lowering clouds, and the first indications of it already at hand. If anything, it was changing for the worse, yet the ships ahead of the Royal George in their effort to close with the flying French had increased their canvas to the danger point.

The British officers were carrying sail with an unusual recklessness of the danger of losing spars, but which at the same time indicated their determination to overhaul their enemy at all hazards. They were able seamen all, and as they watched their ships with the utmost care, saving them as they could in every squall which broke across the taut-strung top-hamper, no mischance had as yet developed.

Far ahead of the flag-ship was the Magnanime, hitherto rated the fastest goer in the fleet. She had been captured from the French not long before, and represented the highest development in naval architecture, and was ripping ahead at a great rate. Strange to say, close behind the Magnanime came the Warspite and the old Dorsetshire, good English bottoms both. They were pressing the French-built ship hard, and it was easy to imagine Howe's vexation at being thus overhauled.

Favoured by a slant of wind, they seemed to be creeping up on their rival, of whom they had gained considerably the weather-gage. To the leeward of these three was the old Torbay, also staggering

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along under a heavy press of canvas. Grafton was driving her for all she was worth, and the old ship had lost no distance as compared with the rest. The Montagu and the Resolution and the rest were keeping well up too. Around the flag-ship the other ships were taking station in accordance with their speed and the skill of their officers.

Of the ships to leeward of Hawke, the Union, with Vice-Admiral Hardy's flag, followed by the Mars and the Hero, were appreciably ahead of the other ships of that division. It was doubtful, however, in view of their leeward and rearward position, whether they could get into action before night or no. It was a great race between the ships of the fleet, with victory, or death, shipwreck, destruction, the prize at the end of it. And no keels that ever ploughed the ocean were ever pushed harder than these with such ends in view.

As for the Royal George, old Campbell was driving her like a madman. The old Scotsman was beginning to lose his phlegmatic coolness in the excitement of the pursuit; indeed, he had quite lost it. Though he still preserved an outward semblance of calm, his soul was burning within him, and, like most calm natures, his emotions were the deeper and more powerful when they were finally aroused. But if he was not quite master of his temper he was still master of his ship—never more so—and the way he was sending her along was nothing less than marvellous. Hawke's eyes sparkled with pleasure as he saw the results of Campbell's seamanship. He still kept all three of the topgallant-sails set, and he had ac-

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tually flung out his maintopmast stunsail! The boom was bending like a whip in the fierce wind.

In spite of her great size—and she was one of the largest ships afloat then—the huge liner was being tossed about like a cork. With everything rap full, and drawing like a tide race, she plunged on. The ebullient water foamed about her narrow cut-water and was thrown away from her broad bows in great sheets with every forward plunge. The lee-chains were dragged under the seething green seas with every leeward roll. It was almost impossible to keep the feet, so uneasy was the ship.

Latterly the flag-ship had improved her position under Campbell's magnificent handling, so that she was about abeam of the *Magnanime*, although the latter ship, being far to windward with her consorts, had still greatly the advantage in the chase. But it was also evident that the old Scotsman had said nothing less than the truth to the admiral. If the *Royal George* held on as she was going, she would be in time to get into the *mêlée* before nightfall.

The fleet had, of course, lost all semblance of order. This was necessitated by the circumstances, and implied no reflection either upon its discipline or Hawke's tactics. It was a general chase, and in Campbell's rough phrase, "Every mon for himsel', an' the de'il tak' the hindmost!" It would have been pleasant to approach and attack the French in accordance with scientific naval tactics, but what could be done when they refused to wait for that sort of thing? Their mad flight toward Quiberon

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Bay precluded anything but the chase which was now going on.

The French liners were probably taster, ship for ship, than the English, but, as always happens when two fleets are opposed, the fastest ships of one fleet invariably have the heels of the slowest ships of the other, and in a general chase some of the pursued are at last overhauled and attacked in force. The decision is thus forced upon the fleeing commander either to abandon his ships which have been attacked, or to join battle to save them, thus defeating the purpose of his flight. Therefore the English van, just as the French rear passed Pointe de l'Echelle, the eastern end of Belleisle, and hauled up for the entrance to the bay, drew within long gunshot of the rear ship.

It was not because his flag floated over a slow keel that Rear-Admiral St. André du Verger in the mighty Formidable assumed this dangerous position; but his native gallantry and heroic resolution made him interpose his strong ship between the rest of his division and their relentless pursuers in the hope that he might thus effect their escape. Of the French captains engaged that day, he, de Kersaint, and possibly one or two others, came out of the conflict with honour not only undimmed, but having written their names high on that roll of heroic men which is the joy and pride of nations. For du Verger and his stubborn fighting in the Formidable undoubtedly did much to save the French fleet from annihilation.

Just ahead of him were L'Héros and Le Mag-

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nifique, seventy-fours, Le Juste and Le Superbe, seventy-gun ships, Le Glorieux, Le Thesée, Le Robuste, and in the lead of the division the ship of de Conflans, Le Soleil Royal. To leeward of this division, in a huddle, were Le Tonnant, the flag-ship of de Beaufremont, and the rest of the French ships, as their speed enabled them to attempt the pass. All order in the French fleet, as in that of their pursuers, had necessarily been abandoned long since.

As the afternoon wore on the wind increased in violence until it was now blowing a whole gale, with prospects rather worse than better. The November tempest swooped down from the west-north-west, and was driving the waters crashing upon the iron cliffs and jagged reefs with which the shore abounds, with tremendous force. The breakers writhed and tore about the splintered needles of rock which pointed warning fingers to approaching mariners; and, perhaps more dangerous to the ships because less known and not noticed, the seas rolled and foamed over low banks of sand which were hidden from view until the observer was almost upon them. It was cold and raw, and the men were chilled to the bone until the excitement of the conflict so heated them that they forgot these things. Before both fleets, and in plain sight from the decks, lay that deadliest of perils to mariners, a stern lee-shore.

On this gray, gloomy November day, in these perilous waters, amid these ghastly dangers, the two fleets, aggregating forty-four great ships, carrying three thousand guns, and manned by upward of thirty thousand men, the one fleet flying in mad

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terror, which appeared to deepen with every moment—the penalty of flight—the other pursuing with a grim determination, which the ever-lessening distance between them and their prey heightened and intensified—the reward of pursuit—prepared to engage in mortal combat. Nature provided a grand yet terrible scene for the action, a fitting setting for the horrors of the battle.

Under ordinary circumstances, no commander would have dared to attempt to make the harbour with a fleet of ships in such weather, but in the face of the howling gale then blowing would have beaten out to sea at every hazard, straining every nerve in a resolute endeavour to make an offing, and thus enable his ships to escape from the perils of that lee-shore. But the circumstances were not ordinary. Hawke felt that he must destroy that fleet, and destroy it then. If he lost the opportunity now, he might never have another chance, so he relentlessly hurled his great ships upon the flying French crowding together at the entrance of the bay.

“I ken they’re gangin’ in all right,” remarked the old captain to his admiral; “the van must be off the west end of Haëdik noo, sir.”

“Yes, where else would they go? De Conflans evidently hopes to get his fleet past the entrance and then ratch up under the lee of the islands and force us to follow him in succession, and fight him to windward of us.”

“’Tis a verra pretty plan, indeed, if he could mak’ it.”

“He can’t, though,” said Hawke. “Look at the

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Warspite, and the Magnanime, and the Dorsetshire, and the Torbay. They are close on the heels of the French rear now. By Heaven, did ever man have a nobler band of captains than those? Ha! What's that?"

"The French are beginnin' to bark, I'm thinkin'," said Campbell, as a puff of smoke broke out on the Formidable, followed some moments after by a dull roar coming faintly against the wind. As the French ships bore up slightly in the wake of de Conflans, they turned their broadsides a little toward the approaching English to windward and some of their guns bore. Presently L'Héros spoke, and then Le Thésée. But the English ships kept on in grim, dour silence. So splendid was the discipline enforced upon them by Hawke that not one of them ventured to make any reply whatever, although the constraint put upon them by the admiral's failure to signal them to begin the game was heart-breaking.

"Mightn't it be well, Sir Ed'ard," asked the old captain, who was a privileged character, "to give 'em a taste o' our metal?"

"Not yet, Campbell," said Hawke, "they haven't done any damage yet. We'll let the van get a little closer before—ha, there they go again! This grows interesting," remarked the admiral, as the guns of the French rear roared out once more.

The old Scotsman, whose coolness was now all gone in his excitement, while the previous excitement of Hawke gave place to a calmness which deepened as the emergency developed, shuffled un-

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easily as he watched the French ships firing upon the still English making no reply; but there were limits beyond which even his privileges did not extend.

There was something awful in the silent approach of those English war monsters. Still-footed fate itself seemed not more terrible to the French. Were their pursuers never to speak? In mad excitement, which vitiated their aim, they poured forth their fire upon their menacing pursuers. Into the flame and smoke the English swept on.

Campbell looked keenly at his commander standing composed and quiet, balancing his huge frame easily to the roll of the ship as he stared out to windward, compressing his lips, his brow beetling, the sparkle in his eyes and the stern smile on his lip proclaiming the battle fire in his heart. Hawke had marked the hurry and haste of the French; he could see that their fire was doing little or no damage, and he did not wish to begin the action until his ships were near enough to make their broadsides tell. He was taking a risk, of course, for a lucky shot might carry away a spar and throw an English ship out of action. Still, there was always that risk, and as the advantage of crushing blows was so great when they could be delivered, he boldly assumed the risk and remained silent.

It was another evidence of that quality and habit of decision which had made him great; which had enabled him to maintain his unheard-of blockade; which had determined the pursuit of that day; which

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made him resolute to engage; which was to be exhibited in other ways before the nightfall, and to his eternal fame! At last the Scotsman ventured to turn to the signal officer, and, taking care that Hawke did not hear his words, quietly bade him bend on the flags and have all in readiness to give the signal.

"I have them ready now, sir," whispered Vernon, displaying the flags already bent to the halliards.

Campbell would have given worlds to have ordered them hoisted, but of course he dared not do so. He fairly wrung his hands in his anxiety.

"Surely," whispered the captain to the young man at last, "Sir Ed'ard must order them set now!"

"Ha," exclaimed Hawke, who did not even yet consider it necessary to give the signal, "how they race along! Did you ever see such magnificent sailing?"

"I'm thinkin' we're doin' pretty weel oursel's, sir," remarked the captain, jealous for his own ship.

"You are. Look at that stuns'l boom! 'Tis bent like a bow and quivering like a reed."

On principle, Hawke rarely ever interfered with the internal administration of the sailing of his flag-ships, and for that reason he was more beloved by his flag-captains than almost any commander that ever sailed. Beyond this significant remark, therefore, he said nothing about the advisability of taking in the studding-sail, but Campbell was shrewd enough to divine what was in his superior's mind.

"Ay, Sir Ed'ard," he replied in answer to the

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other's unspoken comment, "'tis like to carry away at any moment; but we can afford to expend it, an', so long as 'tis set, perhaps it gains us a fathom more of distance, an' damme, sir, beggin' your pardon, Admiral Hawke, the old Geordie's just got to get in to the battle yon!"

"Keep it set if you will, Campbell; indeed, I think 'tis too late to take it in now," laughed the commander; "this is your ship, and——"

There was a crash over their heads.

"There it goes!" cried the admiral, as the boom parted at the iron and the sail was whipped away from its supports in a moment by the gale.

"'Twas a noble stick, Sir Ed'ard," said the old Scotsman, "and hae done us noble service. I expend it gladly."

"Look yonder, now," said Hawke, "how they have weathered on the French! The Warspite is abeam of the Formidable now. The Dorsetshire is close in. The Magnanime is on the quarter and the Torbay is coming up to leeward. They are all within gunshot. Now is our time. Mr. Vernon, show the signal to engage."

The signal quarter-master ran up the little tightly rolled balls of flags to the masts with astonishing celerity, breaking the stops ere they had reached the truck. The wind blew the signal flags out like boards.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE BATTLE IN THE STORM

THE men of the leading English ships had been waiting with feverish impatience for this signal. Before they could fairly show their answering pennants their sides were wreathed in flame and smoke, and the first three ships poured in a furious fire upon the *Formidable*. At the same time Howe, in the *Magnanime*, sheered in to close with the French rear-admiral, with whom he at once joined in fierce engagement.

The *Warspite* and the *Dorsetshire*, after the first broadside, kept on after the French van, pouring their shot into *L'Héros* and *Le Thesée* as they came within range. At the same time the *Torbay*, to leeward of the line, opened fire. As she swept along she hotly engaged *Le Magnifique* and *Le Glorieux*, who were to leeward of the other three. *Grafton*, however, kept working to windward all the time to reach *Le Thesée*, which was heroically supporting the rear-admiral and furiously assaulting the English ships as they approached.

It was half after two o'clock. Not much more than two hours of daylight were now left them, but the battle was at last begun. There would be time for much.

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“ You would better send the men to their quarters now, Captain Campbell, and make preparations for action, as we are overhauling them fast,” said Hawke quietly, his face filled with light as he marked the splendid behaviour of his captains.

The drummers had been waiting below on the quarter-deck in anticipation of just such an order. As the captain nodded his head, the stirring beat to quarters which had called men to battle for centuries—and which calls them still when need requires—rang out over the great decks. Singular, that the beat upon the stretched skin of the most cowardly of animals should produce such an effect as followed:

In an instant the ship was a scene of apparent confusion, out of which, with marvellous speed, the trained and disciplined officers evolved the fighting properties of the formidable machine. The guns were cast loose and provided, the men armed, and everything made ready for the approaching conflict. This done, they settled down at their stations and waited; those whose position aloft or on deck permitted them to do so watching the battle ahead.

Presently the *Defiance* and the *Montagu* joined in the *mêlée* which now involved a half dozen of the French ships. Seizing an opportunity, the *Magnanime* swung to leeward, and, crossing the bows of the *Formidable*, raked her fearfully as she passed. At the same time the *Swiftsure* and the *Revenge*, sweeping along to leeward, enveloped the unfortunate rear-admiral in another terrific discharge.

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Then, as the ships drove ahead, their place was taken by the *Resolution*, which clung to the windward side of the fighting admiral with a bulldog tenacity, and could not be shaken off in spite of the furious fire of the lower ship. The English had made a chopping-block of the unfortunate Frenchman, yet his courage was magnificent—he fought on.

Meanwhile the *Warspite*, temporarily disabled by an unlucky shot, drifted back through the line, and as the *Montagu* burst into the smoke of the conflict the unmanageable ship drove into her, and both together fouled the *Magnanime*. The *Formidable* from her lee guns poured a damaging fire upon the group grinding and churning against each other in the awful sea.

The French admiral was fighting with desperate and splendid valour. Though severely wounded early in the action, he refused to be taken below, and sat in a chair on deck directing the combat. His own ship had been almost dismasted. She was, therefore, practically stationary in the water, and every passing English vessel in pursuit of the van, including, finally, the *Royal George*, made her the target for a free discharge. But the broken ship still fought; her guns roared on. Finally the gallant admiral was killed, and with a loss of upward of five hundred killed and wounded on board her, including the admiral's brother, the captain of the ship, the flag was hauled down and she struck to the *Resolution*, which immediately took possession. It was a little after four in the afternoon. For two

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hours the Formidable had fought half the English fleet. Her action had been heroic. In the English admiral's enthusiastic phrase, his own men were "fighting like angels," too.

Meanwhile Howe, in the Magnanime, had at last succeeded in getting clear of the two ships which had fouled him, and, after exchanging broadsides with *Le Thesée*, had furiously engaged *L'Héros*, a ship of equal force with his own. The two vessels clung to each other as they surged ahead, pouring streams of shot and fire upon each other, until finally, just at dark, the French ship struck. It was too rough to take possession then, and in obedience to signal both ships anchored. The *Defiance* and *Revenge* and *Swiftsure* were all of them in close action. They were scattered everywhere among the French ships, some of them hotly engaged with both batteries, and giving splendid accounts of themselves.

At four o'clock the *Royal George* at last got within striking distance. Reeling through the huddled French, pouring out his broadsides to larboard and to starboard, crashing through sea and smoke and fire, the flag-ship drove on, dealing death and destruction everywhere. *Conflans* had already rounded the *Cardinals*, and, having hauled his wind, headed up the bay, followed by a large number of his ships. Hawke ordered the *Royal George* to be headed straight for them, on the hypotenuse of the triangle, as it were. Campbell happened to be below in the batteries at the time. Hawke personally directed the movement of the ship, and called

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the master, the navigating officer in those days, to his side.

“Lay me alongside that ship, sir,” he said quickly, pointing to *Le Soleil Royal*.

“I can’t do it, Sir Ed’ard,” replied the old man, “there’s not enough water off there for us. The ship’ll be wrecked, sir.”

“You have done your duty,” answered Hawke, “in pointing out the danger. Now lay me alongside that ship.”

“There is no pass, sir.”

“They passed,” said the admiral, “so can we.”

“But we have no pilot.”

“Follow them. They will pilot us in. Where they go we can go, and if they strike on the rocks that will show us what to avoid. Enough!” he cried peremptorily. “Carry out my orders, sir!”

“Very well, sir,” said the old master sadly, but not daring to remonstrate further, giving the necessary directions.

The ship was right off the Grand Cardinals now, so close, indeed, that a biscuit could have been tossed on them. Every moment might be their last. Even old Campbell, with all his recklessness, when he came on deck during the manœuvre ran forward and stood between the knightheds, staring down at the breakers seething ahead, and expecting every second to hear that long, shuddering, ripping crash and feel the awful shock which would tell them they were on the reefs. Going at such a pace and in such a sea, one touch meant destruction.

It was such a scene as almost appals the imagi-

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nation. Around them a great huddle of huge ships, tossing and rolling in the mighty billows, were belching forth fire and shot on every side. Out of the driven smoke, under the lowering clouds of the fast-closing winter day, came the hurtling messengers of death; and the awful roar of the cannonade mingled and blended with the shriek and scream of the wind through the top-hamper in a hideous conglomeration of sound. It seemed as if the mighty tempest itself had sought to hold in check the furious wrath of men—and had failed.

The blood of the English was up. They recked nothing of danger. As Hawke reasoned, they might lose a ship or two against the rocks, but there were the French. When he got through with them their coherent existence as a fleet would be a thing of the past.

He was nearing the ship of de Conflans now, approaching to leeward. The spectators, grouped in thousands upon the adjacent shores watching this awful display of the powers of nature and the passions of men, marked the blue flag of the English admiral closing upon the white flag of the French marshal. But before they joined, the captain of *Le Superbe*, a fine seventy-gun ship, gallantly interposed with his smaller vessel between his own captain and the great liner of Sir Edward Hawke, hurling upon her, as his broadside bore, a wild and ineffectual fire.

“Now, Campbell,” said Hawke quickly, “keep all fast in the batteries until we are right on her, and then pour it in. Ay, open the main-deck ports

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for a moment. I'll throw her up into the wind a little to relieve her heel, and we'll settle this fellow with one blow."

In grim silence, therefore, the Royal George closed with *Le Superbe*, now wreathed and shrouded in smoke and flame from her own guns.

"Go below, yourself, Campbell, to the main-deck and watch those ports. Let no man fire until I give the order. I will con the ship," said Hawke, at last, as they drew nearer; "we will wipe out this one, and then for *Conflans*."

They were right abreast now and close aboard of *Le Superbe*. The huge guns of the Royal George were swinging right and left, converging upon her, the gun captains, burning match in hand, taking long and steady aim.

"Stand by!" the admiral shouted with all his power in a voice heard in every dim recess of the mighty ship beneath him.

"Fire!"

The very heavens were blasted by the concussion of the broadside. The English ship shrank back and shuddered from her own discharge. For a second it seemed as if the wind itself stood still. At close range such a mighty broadside from every gun on the great three-decker was hurled upon the devoted *Superbe* that she was literally torn to pieces. The heavy shot from the forty-two pounders on the main-deck of the Royal George ripped through and through her as if she had been paper. Her masts and spars crashed down, and in the midst of that awful storm she filled with water and sank in less

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than a minute. There were not twenty people on her who were saved. The catastrophe was so sudden and appalling that the English had neither time nor inclination to cheer. But there was no hesitation on Hawke's part. There were still foemen on the sea.

A sheer of the helm brought the English flagship closer to the French. Another second and the two broadsides spoke. Heeling over and over under the tremendous pressure of the wind, now abeam of them, with their rigging blown out in huge circles to leeward, the great ships struggled on. The men stood on the wet, slanting decks, the spray beating upon them as they clustered about the guns and poured shot and shell into each other. But only for a moment was *de Conflans* left alone with Hawke.

The flag-ship of *de Beaufremont* ranged along the unengaged side of the *Royal George* and joined in the action. Other French ships rallied to the support of their commander, and at one time no less than seven of them were firing upon the *Royal George*. Their very number gave the undaunted Hawke a certain immunity, for they were unable in the midst of the storm to take positions of advantage, and in their excitement they shot badly, damaging each other—a thing which might be said of all the French ships that day except *Le Formidable* and *Le Thesée*, perhaps.

It was five o'clock now and quite dark. But Hawke coolly fought on against the mighty odds, until at last some of his own ships struggled up to

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succour him. The *Revenge* and the *Montagu* came to his assistance, crashing into the mass of the French surrounding him. Farther away the *Union*, the *Mars*, and the *Hero*, with other ships of Hardy's division, at last within range, opened fire upon the French. But the little conflict continued until the night fell completely, when the French ships turned tail and fled in every direction. The magnificent *Soleil Royal* was a wreck, masts gone, covered with dead and wounded, she little resembled the proud ship of the morning.

All that mortal man could do had been done by the English. It was absolutely impossible for Hawke and his commanders to follow the French ships in the darkness in these waters. The wind was still rising. It was blowing a hurricane now. Hawke at last gave the signal to anchor—two guns fired in succession. Some of the ships heard it and obeyed, others did not, and beat out to sea again to gain an offing and escape the perils of the reefs and shore. The battle was over, but only the morning would tell the story of their success and loss.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE SINISTER EFFACEMENT OF A SHIP

MEANWHILE, what of Grafton and the Torbay? As we have seen, he had first engaged Le Formidable and poured his broadsides into L'Héros and Le Magnifique, and had successfully hammered his way through the French rear until he brought his vessel alongside Le Thesée.

De Kersaint had well and worthily upheld his reputation as a skilled seaman and a great fighter upon that day, and all of the advancing British ships bore the marks of his prowess. It so happened that neither Le Thesée nor the Torbay had been materially injured in their previous fighting, and it also happened that the chance arrangements of the battle, which placed them side by side, left them to fight it out unhindered. Never were two ships more fairly and equally matched in size, gun-power, crew, and captain.

Grafton had no personal animosity toward de Kersaint. On the contrary, he had pursued him as a foeman entirely worthy of his steel. He knew the man, and that he would certainly be found in the thick of the action. He trusted to compel him to strike, in which case he could at once obtain pos-

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session of Anne—and that was the guiding hope of his heart. Other captains might be fighting for duty alone, or for the sheer love of the combat; he was swayed by all of these emotions, but he fought for love, too—for a woman, his wife!

He resolutely put out of his mind the peril she would be in. He had to do it. To dwell upon it would have unnerved him. Like most men of action, he was something of a fatalist, and he believed that Providence, which had brought about the present state of affairs, would inevitably bring them together again happily in the end. He knew that some one had to fire upon *Le Thesée*, and he preferred to do it himself. He reassured himself by thinking that Anne was stowed away safely in the chain-lockers—which was true—and that her peril would not be great.

At any rate, he found himself at last alongside his desire, but to leeward, a fact which, though he deplored it at the time, afterward turned out fortunately for him. The leeward ship practically has to await the decision of the weather ship, which may attack at pleasure, hence the advantage of the windward position. The windward enemy may attack or wait, the leeward must wait or run.

De Kersaint had no idea of retreating, however. His national hatred of all Englishmen had at last got itself localized and was correspondingly deadly and bitter. He had learned—indeed, it had been impossible to conceal it from him—that his promised bride had been married to Captain Grafton. He hoped and intended to kill the Englishman

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sometime, perhaps on that day of battle, and then marry the woman he loved, as if that previous marriage had never taken place. Her loss only intensified his love for her.

She did not love him, evidently; indeed, she made no secret of her love for her husband. What mattered it? The passion of the old makes up in intensity and persistence for the lost opportunities of youth. The follies of love—the greatest follies, that is, after all—are the follies not of youth but of old age! He would have her, anyway, with or without her love, in the end. De Kersaint had surmised that Grafton would certainly be upon one of the ships of Hawke's fleet, though upon which one he could not, of course, determine.

The two ships were very close together before they engaged, each reserving his fire for a smashing blow, and the men on the poop-decks were already clearly visible to each other. Grafton could see the huge form of de Kersaint standing to leeward, looking at the Torbay as she came up. By his side stood the tall, thin form of the old marquis. Behind him rose the burly person of faithful Jean-Rénaud.

They had embarked, as the marquis had declared, then. In order to get a better view of them Grafton sprang up on the rail, and, steadying himself by the backstay, stared hard at the little group on *Le Thésée*. Where was his wife, he wondered, with a word of quick prayer. Anxiety unspeakable filled his soul.

At the same moment the Frenchmen recognised

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him. The marquis pointed him out to de Kersaint. The count flung his hand to heaven in a gesture half of rapture, half of prayer, and shouted an order for *Le Thesée* to put up her helm and swing toward the Torbay. Joy was in the Breton's heart and savage determination. The opportunity he had prayed for was granted him.

"He's coming!" cried Grafton to the men of his staff, as he saw the movement. "To the batteries, gentlemen! Tell them to be ready—— By Heaven, he's opening his main-deck ports in such a sea! We'll not be outdone by him. And his is the greater risk. Have our main batteries scaled."

He welcomed the attack with a fierce pleasure; the distraction of action alone saved him from breaking his heart. A short space of water and two wooden walls separated him from his wife—so little, yet the water was lashed into mad turbulence by the tempest, and the wooden walls were pierced by a hundred guns ready to sweep him from the sea. Yet he would have her!

Both ships were, of course, heeled to the wind, but *Le Thesée*, being to windward, was forced to fight her lee battery; and the main-deck ports, as she lay over under the furious gale, were so close to the waves that the waters splashed and rippled over the port-sills with every roll. It was reckless trifling with the deadliest of perils, but that he could do so indicated the emotions animating the soul of the French captain. Grafton, being to leeward, fought his windward guns, and the inclination of the ship lifted his own main-deck battery a little farther

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above the water. Still, his own position was also dangerous in the extreme.

Hawke had opened his main-deck ports, but it was in the stiller waters of the bay that he had done so. Grafton and de Kersaint were yet off the Cardinals, the very roughest, stormiest position in the *mêlée* taking place all about them. Their action was madness; yet, if the Frenchman did it in his overwhelming desire to crush the man who had stolen his bride, and now rolled along under his lee, the Englishman could do no less than meet him.

Simultaneously the two broadsides roared out. Again and again, as the ships swept on, they poured a torrent of destruction upon each other from every gun that bore. The firing upon both sides was fast and furious, but the English, with the advantage of the weather battery, proved the better gunners. Many of the shot from the French ship struck the water and glanced over the English ship, but the steady broadside from the Torbay made deadly havoc on the magnificent French liner. Yet her offensive powers seemed undiminished, and she fought on. The Torbay, too, soon began to show evidences of the terrific pounding she was receiving. Both ships were filled with dead and wounded men and were much cut up aloft and aloft.

Grafton fought to win his wife, to serve his country, to avenge the shattering of the little Boxer five years before, and with no bitterness in his heart. De Kersaint fought not only for the honour of France, but with a jealous rage in his heart to kill the man who stood between him and his hopes.

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Neither would be denied. They drew nearer to each other. De Kersaint resolved to resort to a *coup de main*. Grafton also at last made up his mind that he would have to carry the opposing ship by boarding, which was quite in consonance with his desire. He had even gone so far as to call his boarders away, when a sudden squall struck the two ships. For the moment the wind blew a hurricane.

The two vessels heeled suddenly under the terrific impact, going over and over under the irresistible pressure until they lay almost upon their beam-ends. De Kersaint put the helm of *Le Thesée* hard down at once. But she did not respond. The water rushed in her open ports. She began to settle like a stone, righting slowly as she went down. The *Torbay* was scarcely in better condition. On the return roll to windward the water began to rush in her main-deck ports also.

“Close the main-deck ports!” shouted Grafton, as he saw the French ship going so fast, his first impulse being to save his own ship. “Lively, for God’s sake!” The peril of the ship was reflected in his voice.

The men below sprang to the port-shutters, and in spite of the fact that the water was already sweeping in, by superhuman efforts they got them closed, but not until the ship had been half filled. She lay like a sodden log in the waves, six feet of water in the hold. The gun fire had ceased instantly.

Meantime, what of *Le Thesée*?

Grafton stood in the darkening evening on the rail of his own ship and stared at his rival. She was

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sinking in silence. No human power could keep her afloat. Before his eyes the water was streaming through the open ports and gushing in through her riven sides. It had come so suddenly that there was scarcely time for those below to reach the spar-deck, which was yet swarming with men. Where was Anne? O God, was she below still?—abandoned! lost!

A little group still stood on the quarter nearest him. There was de Kersaint, the bold captain; by his side a young man, his head bound about with a blood-spattered cloth, his arm hanging useless by his side. It was de Vitré. There was the marquis, too, tall, spare, imperturbable as ever. There was old Jean-Rénaud staggering aft, and in his arms—God of heaven, a woman! The faithful old Breton placed her on the rail and held her there erect. The stop of Grafton's heart told him who. Her black hair was blown away from her face by the force of the wind. She stood, without a cloak, in a white dress, like a bride of death. She recognised him, stretched out her hands toward him in love and appeal. It was his wife. There was nothing he could do. He was helpless. He could only look and look—he could not pray, even.

The French ship was lower now. Her decks were awash. Anne waved her hand to him in farewell. He cried out to her over the dark water. She could not hear. His wife! His wife! O God, his wife!

The old marquis laid his hand tenderly upon her shoulder, striving to calm her. De Vitré had fallen

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forward and lay motionless on the rail. Perhaps, happily, he was dead already. De Kersaint stood undaunted, with folded arms, looking at *Le Thesée* sinking before and with him. The habit of years had re-established itself. He was a sailor first of all now. He would go down with his ship with colours flying.

Old Jean-Rénaud suddenly stepped upon the rail. He took Anne in his arms. What was he about to do? The marquis nodded his head, kissed his grand-daughter's hand, and that faithful Breton leaped with her far out into the black waters. He would fight for her life. Her husband watched him strike boldly out with her, and then a wave rolled over them and they were gone from view. It had all transpired in a few moments.

"Starboard the helm!" shouted Grafton, awakening from his daze of agony. "Flow the head-sheets!"

"My God, Captain Grafton!" cried his first lieutenant, an old and experienced seaman, "what mean you to do?"

"Luff up toward yon ship!"

"But, sir, we can't do it. Our vessel is full of water!"

"Sir, sir," cried the master, "we'll sink in this wind! We must go off or lose the ship!"

"My God, sir, look at the French ship!" cried another man.

She had been settling evenly, but at last she went down with a mighty plunge. For a moment the sea was black with heads—men struck out frantically

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only to be sucked under in the mighty vortex that followed her disappearance. The last glimpse Grafton caught of the group on the poop-deck, de Kersaint still stood with folded arms looking forward. The marquis took off his hat and looked up toward the flag. "France! France!" he murmured. He made a fine end for a soldier. The English saw it fluttering on the surface of the water for a moment as the mighty spars sank slowly down, and then the waves washed over it. The ship was gone. Not a cheer was heard from the English decks; a groan of horror broke from her men, in fact, as they witnessed this sinister effacement of a ship.

Scarcely a minute had elapsed since the last broadside was fired, and now it was over. A few bits of wreckage, a few desperate men clinging to them, perhaps a score out of eight hundred gallant souls who had manned and fought her a moment since—that was all! Grafton gave one agonized glance aft. He thought in the darkness he could make out the forms of Jean-Rénaud and his wife in the water drifting on. Another moment and they were lost to view.

"Have we a boat that will swim?" he cried in despair to the master.

"Not one is left at the davits, sir," answered that officer sadly.

"Breakers! Breakers ahead!" roared one of the officers forward.

They were right on the Cardinals.

"Up with the helm! Hard up!" shouted Grafton instinctively. But the sluggish ship steered

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slowly. For a few moments she held her way toward the rock. They thought she was doomed also. For himself Grafton did not care, but for his men! They waited in awful apprehension, but at last she slowly swung around and glided by, and peril was escaped. Right next to her was the French ship *Le Juste*, spitting fire and shot from her guns at the Torbay.

“We will attack that ship!” cried Grafton, recklessly turning the prow of his vessel toward her. “Fire upon her. Let her have it, men!”

But there was no response to his command. His guns were silent.

“Beg pardon, sir, the magazines were flooded and all our powder was wetted when we came so near foundering,” reported the gunner who had just come on deck.

“Ah, I had rather have gone down on the Cardinals than be thus helpless!” murmured the young commander, quite beside himself with the disappointments and anxieties of the hour.

“Sir, sir, some dry powder is found!” cried another, running up on the instant.

“Engage! Engage, then!” screamed Grafton fiercely. His mind was so overwhelmed by the catastrophe that he could find no relief save in action, and presently from the iron muzzles of his hot guns once more rang out the deadly discharge. A savage desire to slay, to kill, had supplanted every other emotion in Grafton’s heart. He stood, wild-eyed and despairful, a madman on his own deck, inciting his men to action.

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After half a dozen broadsides *Le Juste*, badly riven and shattered, sheered off and attempted to withdraw, having had enough of it. Grafton, however, was not to be shaken off. He pursued the retreating French ship with implacable ferocity, working every gun that would bear upon her.

As the two ships swept along before the wind Grafton suddenly found himself mixed up with six other ships, one of which happened to be *Le Tonnant*, carrying *de Beauffremont*. Having had enough of the fight, the vice-admiral—not greatly to his credit—had called these ships about him, and they were all endeavouring to escape to the southward through the narrow pass between *Le Four* bank and *Pointe de Croisic* on the shore. But the young Englishman's blood was up now, and he followed hard on their heels, and the singular spectacle of one water-logged and sodden ship pursuing six ships of the enemy was presented. In their wild haste to get away the French neglected the opportunity afforded to capture him.

As they swept around *Le Four* and headed for the south, Grafton, who was ignorant of these waters, as were all the English captains, headed straight for them, firing on them with his chase guns at the same time, the French making but a feeble reply. He had gone only a few cables' lengths, however, when, without any warning, in the darkness his ship took ground. She struck with tremendous force upon the rocky shoal of *Le Four*, and each succeeding wave lifted her higher and higher and hurled her farther upon the shore. The light spars snapped

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like pipe-stems at the first blow, and as the ship pounded upon the reef, mast after mast went, until she lay grinding on the sands a total wreck, the waves breaking over her and sweeping her from stern to stem.

The last shot from *Le Juste* struck the *Torbay* on the quarter just as she hit the reef. It sent a shower of splinters inboard, one of which struck Grafton in the breast and hurled him over the rail to windward. He caught feebly at a backstay, shouted a command, and the next moment a falling spar dashed him into the sea.

For him and for all the rest the battle was over.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE PROTECTOR OF ENGLAND

VERY early in the morning of the twenty-first, the day after the battle, the Maidstone, under the smallest possible canvas that could be spread, which would yet enable Hatfield to retain control of his ship, came flying into the bay. During the night the storm of the previous afternoon had developed into one of the fiercest tempests that ever swept over the Bay of Biscay, and the breaking day revealed a scene of awful desolation.

The storm still raged with unabated violence, and the British ships which had anchored near the Royal George strained and tugged at their cables, under the tremendous pressure of wind and sea, with such force that their officers feared every moment they would drag their anchors and drift ashore. Indeed, if the English captains, by the admiral's direction, had not resorted to the tedious and laborious expedient of housing their topmasts it would have been impossible for them to have ridden out the gale. No ship could remain at her anchors in such a wind with her spars and top-hammer all standing.

Hawke was surrounded by a portion of his fleet

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only. Many of his ships, not having heard the signal to anchor—which was, at night, two guns fired in succession—or mistaking the sound, if it was heard, for a dying reminder of the engagement, had beat out to sea. Most of them did not rejoin him for some days.

Several miles to the northward, off the mouth of the little river Vilaine, could be seen seven French battleships—Le Glorieux, Le Robuste, Le Northumberland, Le Sphynx, Le Solitaire, L'Eveill e, and L'Inflexible—and a few frigates, huddled together, their crews working like mad, casting guns, equipment, and everything movable overboard in order to lighten them sufficiently to enable them to pass over the bar into the shallow waters of the river. Most of them had been severely mauled in the battle.

The eight ships which had fled with de Beauffremont were nowhere to be seen. Far away to the southward they were doing the same thing off the mouth of the Charente. Le Juste, however, had been so badly handled that her officers lost control of her, and she had run ashore on Charpentier reef and had become a total wreck, with the loss of many of her men. The names of these ships were Le Tonnant, L'Orient, L'Intr pide, Le Magnifique, Le Dauphin Royal, Le Dragon, Le Brillant, Le Bizarre. Among these, Le Magnifique was very much cut up, and only kept afloat with difficulty. All of the others were more or less shattered.

Of the other French ships, Le Formidable was anchored near the Magnanime. Her masts having

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been shot out of her, she presented no surface above decks for the pressure of the wind, and consequently rode the storm better than any of the ships about her. She was fairly sound in hull, and the English hoped to make her seaworthy and save her. She was the sole prize remaining to them.

As the daylight came another French ship was revealed anchored in the very middle of Hawke's fleet. It was the unfortunate Royal Sun. She had remained there all night long in the storm. Completely dismasted and shattered beyond hope of repair by the awful battering she had received from the Royal George, and surrounded by English ships, further resistance on her part was impossible. As soon as de Conflans discovered his situation the unfortunate French admiral cut his cable and ran ashore near Croisic.

Near the Torbay, high on Le Four bank, lay L'Héros, which had struck to the Magnanime. She had become unmanageable and drifted ashore during the night. De Conflans landed his men from Le Soleil Royal as best he could in the surf, losing many by the operation, and then set fire to his once magnificent flag-ship. As the French admiral cut his cable Hawke had ordered the Essex to chase him. That vessel, however, was unfortunate in her course, and, through no fault of her captain, ran on Le Four bank by the side of Grafton's ship and became, like the other two, a total wreck. Most of the men on L'Héros, which was set on fire on the twenty-second by Hawke's orders, had previously escaped to the shore.

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Thus the results of the action were: one prize retained by the English (*Le Formidable*, eighty), two ships sunk during the action (*Le Thésée*, seventy-four, and *Le Superbe*, seventy), two ships driven ashore, one of which had struck during the battle (*Le Soleil Royal*, eighty, and *L'Héros*, seventy-four), and one ship wrecked to the southward (*Le Juste*, seventy).

Of the sixteen ships left, those in the mouth of the Vilaine eventually succeeded in escaping into the river after the loss of all their guns and supplies. It was impossible for the English ships, even the frigates, to get near enough to attack and destroy them, which did not matter much, for they were practically helpless, without armament or equipment. They were not only badly shattered from the action, but most of them broke their backs getting over the bars, and never got to sea again. They were subsequently broken up or dismantled and abandoned.

All the other ships which had fled with de Beaufrémont were in similar case. They were lightened by throwing overboard everything movable, and then dragged far up the Charente, where they rotted away in the mud. Their value as cruising ships came to an end. Both squadrons, however, were blockaded closely until the end of the war.

The French naval power, therefore, was practically destroyed on that momentous afternoon. The result of the battle had been absolutely decisive. There was no organic existence left to the great French fleet. The army of d'Aiguillon was at once

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withdrawn from the coast, and any project of invading English territory was abandoned.

All this had been accomplished at the cost of two English ships wrecked on Le Four bank. The rest of the English fleet, after a few necessary repairs had been made, would be in as good condition as when they had started out from Torbay a week before. If they had enjoyed an hour or two more of daylight not a single French ship would have escaped.

Hawke's long blockade, his unerring pursuit, his relentless dash at the retreating French, when only a portion of his command could be brought into action, the grim tenacity with which he had fastened his grip upon them and held it, the dauntless courage with which he had fought his ships in spite of the disadvantages of sea, storm, night, and the unknown and deadly shore, exhibited him as one of the greatest sea-captains that ever sailed a ship or fought a fleet. When the battle of that November day passed into history it was as "The Quiberon Touch," which capped his fortunes.

The French loss in men has never been computed, but it was probably not less than four thousand, most of whom were killed or drowned. That of the English was something less than four hundred, most of whom were only wounded. A phrase from the modest despatch in which Hawke announced the news of his victory to England is well worth quoting:

"When I consider the season of the year, the hard gales on the day of action, a flying enemy, the

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shortness of the day, and the coast they were on, I can boldly affirm that all that could possibly be done has been done. As to the loss we have sustained, let it be placed to the account of the necessity I was under of running all risks to break this strong force of the enemy. Had we but two hours more daylight, the whole had been totally destroyed or taken; for we were almost up with their van when night overtook us."

The bearer of the despatches to the English ministry was stout old John Campbell, who was immediately sent on in a fast frigate to apprise the Government of the news. As he rode post-haste from Portsmouth to London to deliver his message, he was astonished at seeing in certain places through which he passed half-burned effigies of his great admiral. The enraged people of England, when they learned that de Conflans had escaped from Brest, had taken this method of showing their appreciation of their great commander, who at the very time he was being burned in effigy was engaged in fighting the great battle which rendered safe from invasion the shores of England.

As Campbell rode to the King's palace with Anson, the first Lord of the Admiralty, the latter remarked to him that the King would probably knight him.

"An' wherefore should I be a knight? I'll hae none o' it," remarked the Scotsman decisively, "'tis no for me——"

"But think of the advantage, captain."

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“What advantage, my Lord?”

“Have you not a wife, man?”

“Ay, an’ a braw one.”

“If you are knighted she will be ‘My Lady Campbell,’ then.”

“An’ if the woman would be ‘My Lady Campbell,’ let the King knight her, if he will, an’ no me,” responded the stout sailor.

The old Scotsman stood to his guns to the great amusement of everybody, including the King, and his “braw wife” never became “My Lady Campbell.” His Majesty, however, presented him with five hundred pounds to buy a sword, and before he died he was promoted to be a vice-admiral of the red: two things which pleased the canny Scot, and doubtless his “braw wife,” too, more than empty honours, however glorious.

Hawke was immediately given a pension of two thousand pounds a year, was eventually raised to the peerage under the title of Baron Hawke, of Townton, and, after being made Admiral of the Fleet, died in 1781, Vice-Admiral of England. He left to his children the heritage of a great name, a pure life, and the fame of priceless services to his beloved country.

BOOK VII
"OUT OF THE DEEP"

CHAPTER XXXVI

WHAT WAR MEANT IN THAT DAY ON THE SEA

IN one of the cabins of *Le Formidable* lay Captain Philip Grafton. He had been badly wounded by the splinter (a piece of timber six feet long) which had hurled him to the deck of the *Torbay* just as she went on the rocks. The moment in which he had been thrown overboard would have been his last had it not been for the heroic devotion of old Slocum.

Seeing the helpless condition of his commander he had plunged into the water after him, and with superhuman strength, skill, and courage had supported him until he had been able to lay hold of one of the floating spars of the *Torbay*. Slocum had lashed Grafton to the spar and had clung desperately to it himself during half the night. After being tossed about in a sickening way for hours, the piece of timber, with its two exhausted occupants, had been washed athwart *Le Formidable's* cables. Slocum's cries had attracted the attention of Midshipman *La Perouse*, afterward the celebrated navigator

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and discoverer, on board her, and the two Englishmen had finally gained her decks.

The old man was not much the worse for his adventure, but Grafton was in a frightful condition. The blow, the shock, the strain of the combat, the mental agony he had suffered over the loss of his wife, had reduced him to a pitiable state. He was delirious with fever. As he lay in the berth he fought over the battle, heard once more the roar of the guns, witnessed the sinking of *Le Thesée* again, saw once more his white-clad wife——

Le Formidable was a veritable charnel-house. The surgeon and his mates were utterly overwhelmed by the unheard-of demand upon their services. Nearly every officer on the ship had been killed or wounded, and five hundred men in addition, before she had struck her flag. She had, indeed, been fought gallantly—nay, terribly! The ward-room and cabins were filled with groaning, raving men, many of whom had suffered amputation the day before, and had the tourniquets still screwed on the stumps! In some cases the blood-vessels were not taken up until the third day after the battle. The gun-room, the steerage, and every available space between the guns on the lower deck, even the cradles in the hold, to say nothing of the cock-pit, were filled with men in every stage of wound and agony. The ship's medical staff were entirely unable to cope with the situation. They worked like heroes, nor eating, nor sleeping, nor taking any rest, doing their best.

The chaplain had been killed, and the suffering

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and dying were without the consolations and comfort of their religion even. With every plunge of the ship, the wounded, unsecured, unprovided with cots or hammocks (for there were so many that there was no place to lay them except upon the bare decks), were rolled about and thrown against each other with results too sickening to dwell upon. One hideous yell of anguish from every part of the ship mingled with the scream of the tempest. The men prayed to die, and some of the unwounded broke down and became crazed by the awful sights and sounds.

The officer who commanded the French marines on her, stated to the English prize lieutenant that every man of his detachment had been killed or wounded; that he had served in the army for thirty years, and had been present on the bloody field of Fontenoy, but he had never witnessed such a scene of carnage. In fact, all that the surgeons could do in capital operations for hours during and after the battle had been to "amputate, smooth stumps, and apply tourniquets."

Surely never on any ship was exhibited so much of the finished horror of warfare as on this unlucky vessel. The sixteen hundred men who had gone down on *Le Thésée* and *Le Superbe* were to be envied in comparison with the fate of this unfortunate crew. It seems to be a modern phrase to say that "war is hell," but *Le Formidable* presented an ancient example of its eternal truth. Her captors gazed upon the melancholy ruin they had wrought, and to them came an old saying with a new force:

"Blessed are the peacemakers!"

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE WOMAN BEREFT

To return to the Maidstone. She carried in her cabin a passenger—nay, two. The frigates, while not daring to take part in the action, had kept well up and as near as they could to the contending ships. Hatfield had naturally marked the Torbay. He had seen the loss of *Le Thesée*, and had put his ship over toward the place where she had gone down. As he drew near he had ordered out his boats, and at a fearful risk—for it was a most perilous undertaking to launch a boat in such a sea—he succeeded in saving some twenty people from her crew, among them being the Countess Anne and old Jean-Rénaud.

There were neither accommodation, clothing, nor any other conveniences for the reception of a half-drowned woman on the frigate, yet Hatfield had done his best for her. He had given up his own cabin to her and had made her as comfortable as possible therein, while he beat out to sea during the awful night to save his ship.

Buckets of sand in which had been placed heated shot had raised the temperature of the cabin, and Anne's clothing had at last dried on her person in

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the warm room. She had been unable to sleep, and had with difficulty partaken of food. Her condition was indeed deplorable. She had seen her country's fleet defeated; her grandfather had been most certainly drowned, de Vitré and de Kersaint likewise. The ship on which she had been had gone down, although by Jean-Rénaud's action she had been spared much of the horror of that awful scene. What had become of her husband she knew not, consequently she was filled with grief on the one hand and apprehension on the other.

Her state of mind, however, was not quite so bad as was that of Grafton, for he thought that he had lost her, and she still cherished the hope that she would be able to rejoin him. If she were only assured of his safety and they could be together again in the end, she felt she could bear all the other hardships and losses, terrible though they were.

She was ignorant, of course, of the wreck of the Torbay, as was every one else on the frigate, and Hatfield, who had soon discovered her identity, endeavoured to reassure her as to her husband's safety. But it was with a sick heart, indeed, that she stood on the deck by his side, in spite of the storm, wrapped in a boat-cloak which had belonged to Grafton, and which he had left behind in his hasty departure for the Torbay a week ago, while the Maidstone was running into the bay. With him she stared hard at the broken, shattered ships straining at their cables in the storm which swept them on. She marked the three which had been wrecked upon Le Four, two of them dismasted and ruined

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with the ceaseless waves still pounding them to pieces. She saw farther away great bursts of flame and clouds of smoke rising from the two which were on fire and burning furiously.

Hatfield, whose treatment of her had been perfect—she would never forget it—kept by her, supporting her on the uneasy deck of the unsteady ship, intently surveying the scene, too. He did not see the Torbay among those at anchor. As he drew nearer to the group, however, he happened to cast a glance to leeward, and instantly recognised the wrecked ship on Le Four. The involuntary start he gave, as the recognition came to him, attracted the attention of Anne, who turned to him as he stared at the remains of the Torbay. Intuitively she divined that something had occurred, and she gave him no rest until he told her the truth.

It had seemed to her that fate could have laid upon her no heavier burdens than those she had already borne, until this last blow came. She would have fallen to the deck had not Hatfield supported her. He endeavoured, of course, to comfort her, but without success. Though the Torbay was wrecked, they could see that many of her men remained on her, and she still held together. It was quite likely that Grafton was safe, he urged; in which event she would soon see him.

Nerved by this thought, she summoned her resolution once more, and leaning over the rail gazed at the wreck of her husband's ship, and possibly of her own hope and happiness, as they swept on. She would know all in a short time, she thought; mean-

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while she must have the strength to wait a little longer. That wait was to be longer than she dreamed, and of all the demands upon her strength made during the past week it proved the greatest and the hardest to be met.

Hatfield intended to send a boat off to the flagship at once, but when he reached a suitable position for anchoring, the seas were running so heavily and the storm blowing so hard it was impossible for him to do anything all that day. Indeed, he had to bring all his seamanship and experience to bear to save his ship. Anne, in a fever of impatient anxiety, had to wait as best she could. Philip might be there on that ship, wounded, dying, she could not get to him; he might be dead, and she, not knowing it, yet alive. Oh, the raging sea, the cruel storm!

She forgot the anger of men which had wrought such havoc, and railed in her heart against wind and wave and tempest. She was almost beside herself. Hatfield, whose anxiety for his friend was also very strong, had the greatest difficulty in calming her. Indeed, he had but little time from his duties. He had to watch his ship constantly. Great are the demands of duty, but great are its compensations as well. If Anne only could have had something to do she could have borne the killing suspense better; alas! she had only to wait. The strength of woman is to wait. Weakness is passive, yet it conquers, or dies, in the end.

For the same reason of the storm no help could be offered the men on the wrecked ships. Some of them made rafts and escaped to the shore, where

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they were promptly captured, but most of them clung to their vessels until the weather moderated, when they were rescued.

It was not until the gale blew itself out that Hatfield was able to communicate with Admiral Hawke. On the third day after the battle, therefore, the weather at last made it possible for him to call away one of his boats and repair to the flag-ship. Anne went with him, for she had insisted upon going in the first boat that left the frigate. The faithful Jean-Rénaud—whose grief for the master he had abandoned (though by that master's orders) was not less profound than her own for the husband she feared she had lost—accompanied her. Indeed, the old man would not be parted from her.

Sir Edward Hawke, hearing that there was a woman in the approaching boat, came to the gangway to meet them. The old sailor took off his hat before her and stood with bent head, the wind blowing across his gray hairs as Anne, pale and haggard, but still lovely, followed, and, assisted by Hatfield, clambered up the ladder and stepped upon the deck.

“Sir Edward Hawke,” said Hatfield, as he saluted, “allow me to congratulate you on your victory, and then to present you to the Countess de——”

“Pardon, monsieur,” said Anne—“Madame Philip Grafton.”

“Is it possible!” cried the admiral. “My dear lady——”

“Where is my husband, sir?” interrupted Anne.

“Ah, madame, I know not! Yonder upon Le

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Four lie the remains of his ship. We have had no speech with them for two days. The boats of the Union, however, are now taking off the men. We will have a report presently. But you, madame, where were you, may I ask?"

"I was on *Le Thesée*, sir, with my grandfather, the Marquis de Chabot-Rohan."

"My poor child!" exclaimed the admiral.

"They are all gone, sir, are they not? Were any of them saved?" she asked him piteously.

"None! None! How terrible for you!"

"Yes, monsieur, and if I have not my husband, I am indeed lost."

"Pray God he may be saved, madame. And how did you escape?"

"This old man," she said, turning to Jean-Rénaud, "seized me in his arms, leaped with me into the sea, and Monsieur Hatfield, my husband's friend, picked us up."

"You have done well, my brave man," said the admiral in French, turning to Jean-Rénaud, and reaching out his hand.

"No, Monsieur l'Amiral," said the old Breton, shaking his head, tears falling from his eyes, "my master is gone and I am here. He bade me take mademoiselle. He went down with the ship, and I was not there."

"But you saved the mistress," continued the admiral. "'Twas an heroic deed."

"You will not hold him prisoner, sir?" asked Anne anxiously.

"Madame," said Hawke, "he is as free as the

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air. He shall be set ashore where and when he wills."

"No, Mademoiselle Anne," returned the old man mournfully, "they are all gone of the old house I serve, but you. I must stay with you while I am here. Where you go, I go. I could not live and not serve the de Rohans. I am your man now until the end."

"Be it so," said Anne, extending her hand to him. "I stay here until—until——"

"Will you not come into my cabin?" asked the admiral kindly, "and wait there? I shall have news presently, and it will be brought to you at once."

"No, sir," answered Anne resolutely, "I would rather stay here. I can at least look at his ship."

"A boat from the Union, sir, coming on board," reported the officer of the watch. "There are some of the officers of the Torbay in her. I recognise them, sir."

"Is one of them—my husband?" cried Anne.

"Your husband, madame?"

"Captain Grafton," explained Hawke.

"No, madame," answered the young officer, looking at her sadly.

In another moment the first lieutenant of the Torbay stepped up to the admiral and saluted. He was haggard and broken from loss of sleep, exposure, responsibility, and anxiety.

"Sir," he said, "I have to report the loss of the ship to the command of which I succeeded on the night of the battle. Captain Grafton——"

Hawke raised his finger warningly, but before

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the lieutenant realized the situation Anne grasped him by the arm.

“What of him?” she cried.

The officer looked from one to the other in great bewilderment.

“Speak out now, man,” said Hawke impatiently. “The tale must be told now.”

“He was washed overboard when we struck Le Four and we have not seen him since, sir.”

Without a moan or cry Anne sank to the deck at the feet of the old admiral. Stooping over her slight form he lifted her up himself as easily as if she had been his own child—his daughter. He carried her to his cabin, where he sent the surgeon and the old chaplain to her. They were not able to do much with her. When consciousness came back it brought such agony to her that she longed and hoped for death. The admiral visited her again and again, told her he had directed inquiries to be made as to whether any of the other ships had picked her husband up, bade her not despair—in short, the grim old warrior was as tender of her as a father, as gentle to her as a woman.

As the morning wore on communication was had with Le Formidable, and from her news of Grafton's safety secured. Hawke himself carried the news to the devoted woman, who revived so much on receipt of the tidings that she insisted upon going aboard the captured ship at once. By the admiral's direction his own barge, which had been uninjured in the battle, was called away and placed at her disposal. Hatfield accompanied her.

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“Tell him from me,” said Hawke, as he bade her good-bye at the gangway, “that he did magnificently. I marked his course, I saw his fighting. England shall hear of it. Tell him, too, not to worry over the loss of his ship. It was a thing that might have happened to any one. I am thankful we got off so easily.” He stopped and looked gravely yet kindly at her, laying his hand on her head—she seemed to remind him of his own daughter. “Tell him, also, that the best share of the victory and the greatest prize has fallen to him since he has you. They tell me he is desperately wounded and unconscious, but you will revive him and bring him to life if anything can. Don’t give way. He needs you now. I don’t wonder he fought as he did! ’Twas not for England only, but for his wife as well—and such a wife! You must bring him back to the Royal George when you can, and come back yourself if you stay with him——”

“I shall never leave him again, monsieur,” she murmured. “Whom have I now but him? I thank you; you have been good to me. I shall not forget it.”

She seized his hand, and before he could withdraw it, much to his embarrassment she carried it to her lips and was gone.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE

SINCE early morning the surgeons from the English ships had been working with the wounded on *Le Formidable*, and details of seamen had been working over the ship herself as well, so that, while she was still a picture of ruin and devastation, she was in a very much better condition than she had been. Most of the severely wounded had died in the interim, and their bodies had been cast overboard with as much reverence as the demands of the living and their pressing necessities admitted, which was not much. Those who yet remained alive were fast becoming amenable to the treatment, but the ship itself was a sufficiently ghastly place, in spite of all that had been done for her and for her crew, to have appalled the stoutest heart.

Philip's wife, however, saw nothing of this. There was nothing before her heart but her husband and his welfare. She knew nothing, saw nothing, thought of nothing but him. She had long since passed beyond the normal capacity of humanity to experience suffering—save in so far as he was concerned. Nothing else made any appeal to her deadened sensibilities. She had still strength to get to his side; after that——

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She sat in the boat, as it made its way toward Le Formidable, with her eyes closed, her lips murmuring prayers. And though her eyes were opened on the ship, it made little difference to her. She stood on the wreck as one blind. Hatfield helped her tenderly over the side, and with a word of explanation to the prize-master took her immediately below to the great cabin.

They had given Grafton the room that had belonged to the brave Admiral du Verger, now peacefully sleeping beneath the waves on the scene of his heroic defence.

As they approached the door Anne could hear her husband's voice. He was alive, then, thank God! Hatfield pushed open the door and she entered. At the head of the berth on a low stool sat a grim old sailor, his face buried in his hands. He lifted his head as they entered, rose to his feet, and stared at her.

"Who be you, ma'am?" he asked.

"I am his wife," she answered, pushing past him toward the berth.

There was her husband. He was white, haggard, and broken. He looked utterly exhausted—dying. The fever which had possessed him had reduced him to the last extremity. His eyes were closed; he was muttering to himself. She bent her head to listen. How the scene in the old house in Quebec came back to her as she saw him lying helpless before her thus again!

"My ship!" he murmured. "My ship! She strikes! Ha! She's going down! Le Thesée! My

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God, my wife—my wife—have mercy on me! My ship—my wife—pity, pity, O God, my wife—my wife——”

“He’s been sayin’ them words for three days. ’Tis his wife an’ the ship all the time,” whispered the old sailor to Hatfield.

Anne stared at Grafton in strained silence. He did not know her. Would he ever do so? She thought, if he did not recover consciousness, if he did not cease that unwearying murmur of ship and wife, she would die there before him. She was petrified, appalled, shocked by the cumulative events of the week—tried beyond endurance. She stared longer, growing whiter as she did. Was she dying, too? Well, what mattered it? They would go together. Hatfield saw her sway, and not with the motion of the ship. He sprang to her side and caught her by the shoulder. Old Slocum took her by the hands.

“Ma’am,” he said in his rude way, tears filling his eyes, “I knowed him w’en he was a babby. I sailed with his father. Pull yourself together an’ speak to him. If you don’t call him back agin he’s gone. The doctor says he can’t do nuthin’ more fer him. Speak to him, fer God’s sake, ma’am!”

Anne roused herself with a last desperate effort—summoned the vestiges of her resolution once more, and, as she thought, for the last time—stepped nearer to Grafton, laid her hand upon his brow, and bent her lips low toward him.

“Philip!” she whispered. “Philip, O Philip! My husband!”

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He heard the unfamiliar sound. His babbling ceased. He opened his eyes and lay strangely still, looking at her.

"Little France," he whispered, "is it thou?"

"I, indeed, Philip!" cried the girl.

"My wife!" he murmured.

"Yes, yes, now and forever! O Philip, Philip, I called to God out of the deep and He heard me! We will never be parted."

"You have called me back to life," he murmured.

She laid her head upon his breast, as she had done many times before in Canada. He closed his eyes. Had he fainted? But, no, she felt the pressure of his hand. He would recover now. It needed no other skill than that supplied by her loving heart to assure her of that. He had grown strangely calm in her presence. Her own strength came back to her before his weakness. She seemed to lift him up to life and love again. The silence in the cabin was broken only by the sound of the waves rushing along the side, the creaking and groaning of the timbers from the uneasy pitching of the ship.

Hatfield beckoned old Slocum, and the two men slipped noiselessly out.

"I guess he don't want me no more, sir," said the old sailor sadly, as he stepped out of the cabin, "an' I took keer on him w'en he was a babby."

"And I lost my ship, darling," whispered Philip at last, all the sorrow of a sailor and a captain in his voice.

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“ Yes, but the admiral said you had done nobly and you were not to mind. He would see.”

“ Ah, he is a kindly man! ”

“ He was kind to me, too. And I am grateful.”

“ And I, too.”

“ Philip, do you know that I am alone now but for you? ” continued the girl sadly. “ Grandfather, friends, country, all seem to have gone down in that terrible ship.”

“ ’Twas not my ship that sunk her, dear,” protested her husband. “ God’s hand dealt the blow. He saved you. He brought us together again. I shall be all things to you by His help. I promise Him, I promise you.”

“ And I believe you and I trust you. I always believed you—and trusted you, even as a child, my Philip.”

“ And you will do so still? ”

“ To the very end.”

“ That picture, Anne, darling,” whispered Grafton at last, “ that you gave me, ’twas broken by the blow that struck me down.”

“ Let it be!” cried the girl. “ You have me now, is not that enough? ”

“ And that slipper,” he murmured, “ that I took from your room in the tower——”

“ Did you take it? ” she cried, faintly smiling through her tears. “ I missed it and wondered.”

“ ’Tis gone, too,” he said, “ lost with the Torbay.”

“ Philip,” she said suddenly, “ that other locket?”

From Death unto Life

Ah, you wear it still!" she added, lifting the chain with her hand.

In spite of herself her eyes looked the desire she did not express.

"There can be no secret between us now, sweet Anne," said Grafton. "Open it."

She drew back. His willingness was all she wished.

"Nay, I trust you in all. I have you. You are mine. No pictured woman may rise to claim you now."

"None ever will, dear," he answered. "But open it. I desire it. The dead general would wish it, too, could he but know you."

With eager hands she drew the little golden locket from its weather-stained leather case. She pressed the spring and opened it. The miniature of a beautiful young woman looked up at her. As she gazed at it a moment her eyes filled with tears. She could not help but be very jealous.

"She is very beautiful," she murmured pitifully, looking from the portrait at her husband.

"Is she?" he said faintly. "I never saw her."

"Never saw her!"

"No, she was the betrothed of General Wolfe. He gave me the locket the night before the battle of Quebec, and bade me place it in her hands when I returned to England, with all the love of his heart, and he told me to tell no one; but now you—well, we will take it to her together."

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“Yes, yes—poor maiden! Ah, Philip, Sir Philip, how well you English know how to love a woman!”

“A man would be a poor fellow indeed, Anne,” he answered, “whom you could not teach to do that.”

L'ENVOI

FAREWELL!

NEARLY two years have fled away. It is a new scene in a new land. Under a grove of mighty trees, the forest primeval, indeed, on the brow of a hill, a gray old manor-house stands upon a grassy lawn stretching down to the shining waters of the broad Potomac. On the edge of the bluff, looking far over the river, is a little pleasure-house. It is late spring in the Old Dominion.

Philip and Anne Grafton for some time past have been established in the ancestral home of the family from which her mother sprang, which had descended to her shortly before. Though he had given up active service in the English navy, out of deference to his wife's feelings, who would not see him war against her countrymen, and who could not bear to think of him on that sea which had taken her grandfather and father as well, Grafton had retired with the sanction and approval of the King. His beautiful wife and her story had won the kind heart of queer little George II, and, while loath to lose so good an officer, he had at last said "Yes" to all her pleadings for her husband. She had suffered enough and she was entitled to consideration.

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From a tall masthead, erected on the sloping lawn, every day flutters a small blue flag, which is especially under the care of a certain ancient mariner of aspect curious and language quaint, who rolls along the walks and drives of the Virginia plantation as if he were still on the heaving deck of a ship. He answers to the name of Jabez Slocum, and is full of strange tales of distant lands and teeming seas. The children of the vicinity love him.

Philip's neighbours, in common with this old man, call him "Admiral Grafton." He is, in fact, a rear-admiral of the blue, and the flag is that of his rank.

In the little summer-house there are two women. The difference between them is as marked, thinks Philip, as he observes them, himself unseen, from the porch of the house above, as when he first saw them in the old Château de Josselin in Brittany in France. There is but one doll between them now. It is not Tôto, nor any of the demoiselles de Paris. This one has blue eyes like his father and mother, and the midnight hair of Anne has been lightened into a curly brown that speaks of Philip. Josette, who had been brought from France after the battle, kneels at her mistress' feet in adoration. From where Grafton stands he can see the downy head of his young son nestling against the fair white bosom of his mother. Young Philip de Rohan Grafton is hungry—but he will not be so long!

The two women break into the words of a familiar song. The man watches and listens. There is a

Farewell !

step behind him. He turns and finds himself face to face with old Jean-Rénaud.

“They sing yonder. Do you hear?” asked Grafton.

“Yes, monsieur,” answered the old man smiling.

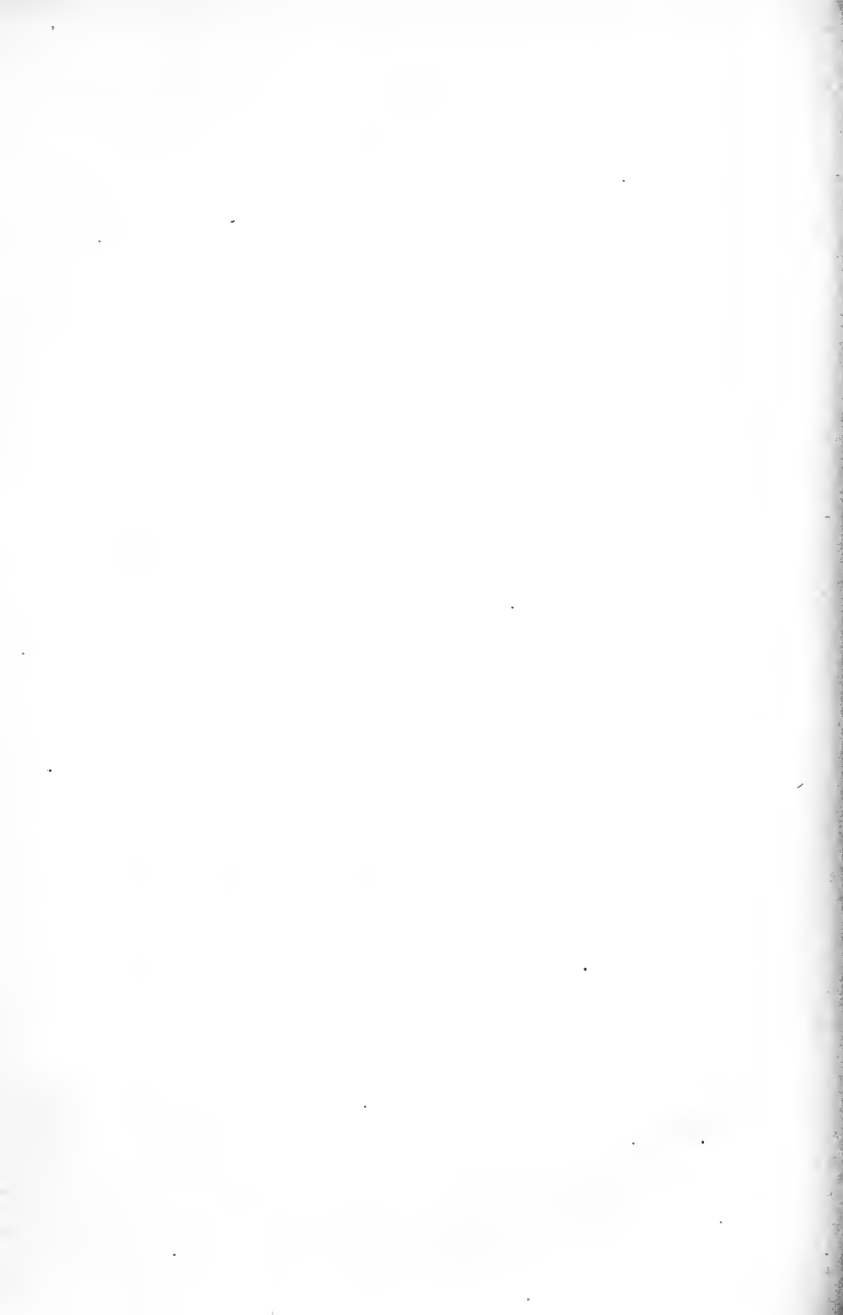
“Do you know what it is they sing?”

Philip knows it well, he has heard it often; but still he asks the question, thinking the while of the morning he first heard it from the children at the foot of the tower when he asked Jean-Rénaud about it long ago.

“Yes, Monsieur l’Amiral. ’Tis a Breton cradle-song with which the mothers put their babies to sleep.”

The two men look and listen. The two women sing on. The baby sleeps.

There is peace in the land.



AFTERWORD

PREFACES and "forewords" are as "plenty as blackberries." Few people, however, seem to read them. Perhaps an "afterword" may meet with a better fate—and the fashion has already been set. Those who, like the Chinese, begin a book on the last page may be inveigled into reading this.

It is a bad plan to commence a sermon—with the making of which I am measurably familiar—with an apology, and the rule holds good of a book. We have arrived at the conclusion of this tale, and, like most prefaces, this is written after the book was completed; but I will extend the rule and refrain from apologizing even at the end—then it is too late, anyway.

This is merely a statement, therefore, that instead of Philip Grafton, it was the celebrated Jervis, afterward Earl St. Vincent, who received the locket and Wolfe's confidences in the cabin of the Sutherland; that it was Keppel, subsequently the great antagonist of d'Orvilliers, who commanded

The Quiberon Touch

the Torbay at Quiberon, and it was the Resolution and not the Torbay that was wrecked in that titanic struggle. Nor did the war begin in 1754. There was an ostensible peace between France and England then, in spite of the sharp fighting during Washington's and Braddock's campaigns in the valley of the Ohio in that and the following year,* and the war was not formally declared until 1756.

The two great historical events around which the action of the story centres were of vital importance to the future of America and England. Failing the victory at Quebec, which virtually terminated the war on this continent, in which the Americans received such valuable lessons, the United States would probably never have won its independence. There would have been another outlet for the growing energies of the colonies in that event—namely, fighting with Canada instead of with England. Without the victory at Quiberon, in which the naval power of France was annihilated, England might not have been able to hold New France, and the British Empire certainly would not at that time have begun to be. The story of Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham is a familiar one. The magnificent fighting of Hawke in the storm off Quiberon is

* See my book, *Colonial Fights and Fighters*, for a detailed account of these celebrated campaigns.

Afterword

practically unknown. Yet he was one of the most splendid seamen—as well as one of the most brilliant and dashing fighters—in the long, glorious line of English admirals. Well does Burke style him “The Great Lord Hawke.” His crushing of the French fleet sealed the conquest of Canada, and, as I said before, determined the beginning of one of the greatest achievements in state building the world has ever seen—the British Empire. The year 1759, marked by the battles of Quebec and Quiberon, fitly may be called the *annus mirabilis* of William Pitt and of England.

The battle of Quiberon is told as it happened. Although there are many allusions to it, and a number of anecdotes concerning it to be found, there is in existence no coherent, clear, detailed account of that tremendous action—unless in Mahan—no map or plan of it; nor have I ever seen any picture or sketch of it. I have ransacked the various histories, and examined all the accounts to which I could get access, including some unpublished manuscript recently brought to light for the first time, and have so built up the story. The archives of France and England have been searched for confirming details, and I believe, with the exceptions noted above, that the description is accurate, and the things set down really happened. Notably is

The Quiberon Touch

this true of the smashing of *Le Superbe* and the foundering of *Le Thesée*. The account of the scene on *Le Formidable*, after the battle, is taken from the rare journal of an English naval surgeon who was there. I have not ventured to quote the full details of his horrible recital of what he saw on that ship. Many of the conversations in which Hawke takes part are on record as well.

To turn to lighter themes: the cradle-song, for the English version of which I am indebted to a gifted young friend, is still sung by the mothers to their children in ancient Brittany. And with this note concerning the peaceful little lullaby I leave my readers—with a regret on my part in which I fondly hope they share.

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