
D. Maillart
HAL MALO

BOOK III.

HALMALO.

I.

SPEECH IS WORD.

The old man slowly lifted his head.

He who had addressed him was about thirty years of age. The tan of the sea was upon his brow; there was something unusual about his eyes, as if the simple pupils of the peasant had taken on the keen expression of the sailor; he held his oars firmly in his hands. He looked gentle enough. In his belt he wore a dirk, two pistols, and a rosary.

"Who are you?" said the old man.

"I have just told you."

"What do you wish?"

The man dropped the oars, folded his arms, and replied,—

"To kill you."

"As you please!" replied the old man.

The man raised his voice.

"Prepare yourself."

"For what?"

"To die."

"Why?" inquired the old man.

A silence followed. For a moment the question seemed to abash the man. He continued,—

"I tell you that I mean to kill you."

"And I ask of you the reason."

The sailor's eyes flashed.

"Because you killed my brother."

The old man answered quietly,—

"I saved his life at first."

"True. You saved him first, but you killed him afterwards."

"It was not I who killed him."

"Who was it, then?"

"His own fault."

The sailor gazed on the old man open-mouthed; then once more his brows contracted savagely.

"What is your name?" asked the old man.

"My name is Halmalo, but I can kill you all the same, whether you know my name or not."

Just then the sun rose; a ray struck the sailor full in the face, vividly illumining that wild countenance.

The old man studied it closely. The cannonading, though not yet ended, was no longer continuous. A dense smoke had settled upon the horizon. The boat, left to itself, was drifting to leeward.

With his right hand the sailor seized one of the pistols at his belt, while in his left he held his rosary.

The old man rose to his feet.

"Do you believe in God?" he asked.

"'Our Father who art in heaven.'" replied the sailor.

Then he made the sign of the cross.

"Have you a mother?"

He crossed himself again, saying,—

"I have said all I have to say. I give you one minute longer, my lord."

And he cocked the pistol.

"Why do you call me 'My lord'?"

"Because you are one. That is evident enough."

"Have you a lord yourself?"

"Yes, and a grand one too. Is one likely to be without a lord?"

"Where is he?"

"I do not know. He has left the country. His name is Marquis de Lantenac, Viscount de Fontenay, Prince in Brittany; he is lord of the Sept-Forêts. I never saw him, but he is my master all the same."

"If you were to see him, would you obey him?"

"Of course I should be a heathen were I not to obey him! We owe obedience to God, and after that to the king, who is like unto God, and then to the lord, who is like the king. But that has nothing to do with the question; you have killed my brother, and I must kill you."

The old man replied,—

"Let us say, then, that I did kill your brother; I did well."

The sailor had closed more firmly upon his pistol.

"Come!" he said.

"So be it," said the old man.

And he added composedly,—

"Where is the priest?"

The sailor looked at him.

"The priest?"

"Yes. I gave your brother a priest; therefore it is your duty to provide one for me."

"But I have none," replied the sailor.

And he continued,—

"How do you expect to find a priest here on the open sea?"

The convulsive explosions of the battle sounded more and more distant.

"Those who are dying yonder have their priest," said the old man.

"I know it," muttered the sailor; "they have the chaplain."

The old man went on,—

"If you make me lose my soul, it will be a serious matter."

The sailor thoughtfully bent his head.

"And if my soul is lost," continued the old man, "yours will be lost also. Listen to me; I feel pity for you. You shall do as you like. For my part, I only fulfilled my duty when I first saved your brother's life and afterwards took it from him; and at the present moment I am doing my duty in trying to save your soul. Reflect; for it is a matter that concerns you. Do you hear the cannon-shots? Men are dying over yonder; desperate men, in their last agony, husbands who will never see their wives, fathers who will

never see their children, brothers who, like yourself, will never see their brothers. And who is to blame for it? Your own brother. You believe in God, do you not? If so, you know that God is suffering now. He is suffering in the person of his son, the most Christian king of France, who is a child like the child Jesus, and who is now imprisoned in the Temple; God is suffering in his Church of Brittany, in his desecrated cathedrals, in his Gospels torn to fragments, in his violated houses of prayer, in his murdered priests. What were we about to do with that ship which is perishing at this moment? We were going to the relief of the Lord. If your brother had been a trustworthy servant, if he had performed his duties faithfully, like a good and useful man, no misfortune would have happened to the carronade, the corvette would not have been disabled, she would not have got out of her course and fallen into the hands of that cursed fleet, and we should all now be landing in France, brave sailors and soldiers as we were, sword in hand, with our white banner unfurled, a multitude of contented, happy men, advancing to the rescue of the brave Vendean peasants, on our way to save France, the king, and Almighty God. That is what we were intending to do, what we should have done, and what I, the only one remaining, still propose to do. But you intend to prevent me. In this struggle of impious men against priests, in this conflict of regicides against the king, of Satan against God, you range yourself in the ranks of Satan. Your brother was the Devil's first assistant, you are his second. What he began you mean to finish. You are for the regicides against the throne; you take sides with the impious against the Church. You take away the Lord's last resource. For, as I shall not be there,—I, who represent the king,—villages will continue to burn, families to mourn, priests to bleed, Brittany to suffer, the king to remain imprisoned, and Jesus Christ to grieve over his people. And who will have caused all this? You. Well, you are carrying out your own plans. I expected far different things from you, but I was mistaken. It is true that I killed your brother. He played a brave part, for that I rewarded him; he was guilty, therefore I punished him. He failed in his duty; I have not failed in mine. What I did I would do again; and I swear by the great Saint Anne of Auray, who looks down on us, that under like circumstances I would shoot my own son just as I shot your brother. Now you are the master. Indeed, I pity you. You have broken your word to the captain,—you, Christian without faith; you, Breton without honor. I was intrusted to your loyalty, and you accepted the trust meaning to betray it; you offer my death to those to whom you have promised my life. Do you realize whom you are destroying here? It is your own self. You rob the king of my life, and you consign yourself forever to the Devil. Go on, commit your crime. You set a low value on your share in Paradise. Thanks to you, the Devil will conquer; thanks to you, the churches will fall; thanks to you, the heathen will go on turning bells into cannon,—men will be shot with the very instrument that once brought to mind the salvation of their souls. Perhaps at this

moment, while I still speak to you, the same bell that pealed for your baptism is killing your mother. Go on with the Devil's work. Do not pause. Yes, I have condemned your brother; but learn this,—I am but a tool in the hands of God. Ah I you pretend to judge God's ways? You will next sit in judgment on the thunderbolt in the heavens. Wretched man, you will be judged by it. Beware what you do. Do you even know whether I am in a state of grace? No. Never mind, go on; do your will. You have the power to hurl me to perdition, and yourself likewise. Your own damnation, as well as mine, rests in your hands. You will be answerable before God. We are alone, face to face with the abyss; complete your work, make an end of it. I am old, and you are young; I have no weapons, you are armed: kill me."

While the old man, standing erect, was uttering these words in a voice that rang above the tumult of the sea, the undulations of the waves showed him now in shadow, now in light. The sailor had turned ghostly pale; large drops of moisture fell from his brow; he trembled like a leaf; now and then he kissed his rosary. When the old man finished, he threw away his pistol and fell on his knees.

"Pardon, my lord! forgive me!" he cried. "You speak like our Lord himself. I have been wrong. My brother was guilty. I will do all I can to make amends for his crime. Dispose of me; command me: I will obey."

"I forgive you," said the old man.

II.

A PEASANT'S MEMORY IS WORTH AS MUCH AS THE CAPTAIN'S SCIENCE.

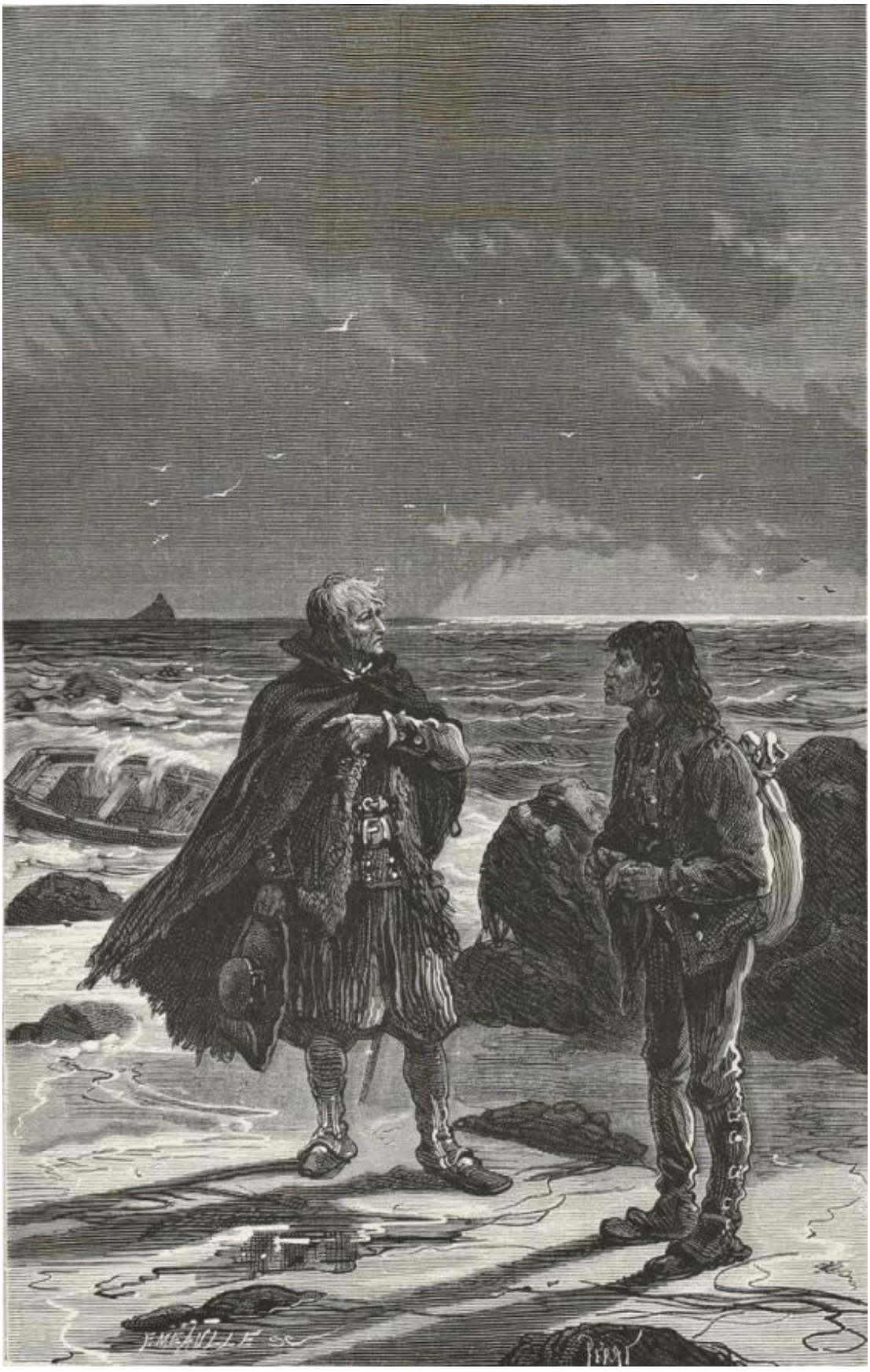
The provisions with which the boat had been stocked were far from superfluous; for the two fugitives were forced to make long détours, and were thirty-six hours in reaching the coast. They passed the night at sea; but the night was fine, with more moonlight than is pleasing to people who wish to escape observation.

At first they were obliged to keep away from the French coast, and gain the open sea in the direction of Jersey. They heard the final volley from the unfortunate corvette, and it sounded like the roar of a lion whom the hunters are killing in the forest. Then a silence fell upon the sea.

The corvette "Claymore" perished like the "Vengeur;" but glory has kept no record of its deeds. One can win no laurels who fights against his native land.

Halmalo was a remarkable sailor. He performed miracles of skill and sagacity. The route that he improvised amid the reefs, the waves, and the vigilance of the enemy was a masterpiece. The wind had abated, and the struggle with the sea was over. Halmalo had avoided the Caux des Minquiers, and having rounded the Chaussée aux Boeufs, took refuge there, so as to get a few hours of rest in the little creek formed by the sea at low tide; then rowing southward, he continued to pass between Granville and the Chausey Islands without being noticed by the lookout either of Chausey or Granville. He entered the Bay of Saint-Michel,—a daring feat, considering that the cruising squadron was anchored at Cancale.

On the evening of the second day, about an hour before sunset, he passed the hill of Saint-Michel, and landed on a shore that is always avoided on account of the danger from its shifting sand.



Fortunately the tide was high.

Halmalo pushed the boat as far as he could, tried the sand, and, finding it firm, grounded the boat and jumped ashore, the old man following, with eyes turned anxiously towards the horizon.

"My lord," said Halmalo, "this is the mouth of the Couesnon. We have Beauvoir to starboard, and Huisnes to port. The belfry before us is Ardevon."

The old man bent over the boat, took from it a biscuit, which he put in his pocket, and said to Halmalo,—

"You may take the rest."

Halmalo put what remained of meat and biscuit in the bag, and hoisted it on his shoulder. Having done this, he said,—

"My lord, am I to lead the way, or to follow you?"

"You will do neither."

Halmalo looked at the old man in amazement.

The latter went on,—

"We are about to separate, Halmalo. Two men are of no use whatever. Unless they are a thousand, it is better for one man to be alone."

He stopped and pulled out of his pocket a knot of green silk resembling a cockade; with a fleur-de-lis embroidered in gold in the centre.

"Can you read?" he asked.

"No."

"That is fortunate. A man who knows how to read is embarrassing. Have you a good memory?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Listen, Halmalo. You will follow the road on the right, and I the one on the left. You are to turn in the direction of Bazouges, and I shall go towards Fougères. Keep your bag, because it makes you look like a peasant; hide your weapons; cut yourself a stick from the hedge; creep through the tall rye; glide behind the hedges; climb over fences and cross the fields: you will thus avoid the passers-by, as well as roads and

bridges. Do not enter Pontorson. Ah! you will have to cross the Couesnon. How will you manage that?"

"I shall swim across."

"Excellent. Then you will come to a ford. Do you know where it is?"

"Between Nancy and Vieux-Viel."

"Correct. You are evidently familiar with the country."

"But night is coming on. Where will my lord sleep?"

"I can take care of myself. And where will you sleep?"

"There are plenty of *émousses*. I was a peasant before I was a sailor."

"Throw away your sailor hat; it would betray you. You can surely find some worsted head-covering."

"Oh, a cap is easily found. The first fisherman I meet will sell me his."

"Very well. Now listen. You are familiar with the woods?"

"All of them."

"Throughout this entire neighborhood?"

"From Noirmoutier to Laval."

"Do you know their names too?"

"I know the woods and their names; I know all about them."

"You will forget nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Good. Now mind. How many leagues can you walk in a day?"

"Ten, fifteen, eighteen, twenty, if need be."

"It will have to be done. Do not miss a word of what I am about to tell you. You will go to the woods of Saint-Aubin."

"Near Lamballe?"

"Yes. On the edge of a ravine between Saint-Rieul and Plédéliac there is a large chestnut-tree. You will stop there. No one will be in sight."

"But a man will be there nevertheless. On that I can depend."

"You will give the call. Do you know it?"

Halmalo puffed out his cheeks, turned towards the sea, and there rang the "to-whit-to-hoo" of the owl.

One would have supposed it came from the depths of a forest, so owl-like and sinister was the sound.

"Good!" said the old man. "You have it."

He extended to Halmalo the green silk knot.

"This is my commander's badge. Take it. No one must know my name at present; but this knot is sufficient. The fleur-de-lis was embroidered by Madame Royale in the Temple prison."

Halmalo knelt. Trembling with awe he received the knot embroidered with the fleur-de-lis, and in the act of raising it to his lips, he paused as if in fear.

"May I?" he asked.

"Yes, since you kiss the crucifix."

Halmalo kissed the fleur-de-lis.

"Rise," said the old man.

Halmalo obeyed him, placing the knot in his bosom.

"Listen carefully to what I am about to say. This is the order: 'Revolt! Give no quarter.' On the edge of the forest of Saint-Aubin you will give the call, repeating it three times. After the third time you will see a man rise from the ground."

"I know, from a hole under the trees."

"That man will be Planchenault, sometimes called Coeur-de-Roi. To him you will show this knot. He will know what it means. Then you are to go by ways that you must discover for yourself to the woods of Astillé, where you will see a cripple surnamed Mousqueton, a man who shows mercy to no human being. You are to tell him that I love him, and that he must stir up the parishes in his neighborhood. Thence you will go to the wood of Couesbon, which is one mile from Ploërmel. When you give the owl-cry, a man will come out of a hole; that will be M. Thuault, seneschal of Ploërmel, who formerly belonged to the Constitutional Assembly, but on the royalist side. You will direct him to fortify the castle of Couesbon, that belongs to the Marquis de Guer, a

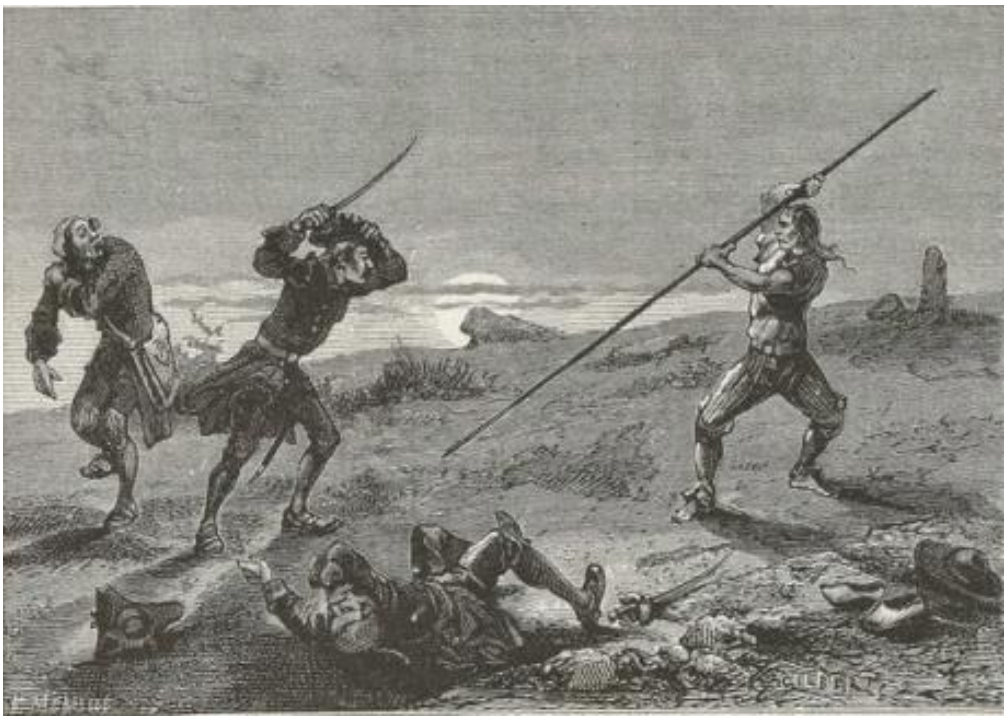
refugee. Ravines, woods of moderate extent, uneven soil, a good spot. M. Thuault is an able and upright man. From there you will go to Saint-Guen-les-Toits, and speak to Jean Chouan, whom I look upon as the actual leader, and then to the woods of Ville-Anglose, where you will see Guitter, called Saint-Martin; you will tell him to keep his eye on a certain Courmesnil, son-in-law of the old Goupil de Préfeln, and who is the head of the Jacobins of Argentan. Remember all this. I write nothing, because writing must be avoided. La Rouarie made out a list, which ruined everything. Thence you will go to the wood of Rougefeu, where Miélette lives, he who leaps across ravines by the help of a long pole."

"They call it a leaping-pole."

"Do you know how to use it?"

"Am I not a Breton peasant? The leaping-pole is our friend. It makes our arms bigger, our legs longer."

"That is to say, it reduces the enemy and shortens the way. An excellent machine."



"Once, with my leaping-pole, I stood my ground against three salt-tax men armed with sabres."

"When was that?"

"Ten years ago."

"Under the king?"

"Certainly."

"Against whom?"

"I really do not know. I was a salt-smuggler."

"Very good."

"It was called fighting against the collectors of the salt-tax. Is the tax on salt the same thing as the king?"

"Yes, and no. But it is not necessary for you to understand this."

"I ask monseigneur's pardon for having put a question to monseigneur."

"Let us go on. Do you know the Tourgue?"

"Do I know it! I came from there."

"How is that?"

"Why, because I come from Parigné."

"To be sure, the Tourgue borders on Parigné."

"Do I know the Tourgue! The great round castle belongs to the family of my lords. A large iron door separates the old building from the new part, which a cannon could not destroy. In the new building they keep the famous book on Saint-Barthélémy, which people come to see as a curiosity. The grass is full of frogs. When I was a boy I used to play with those frogs. And the underground passage, too. Perhaps I am the only one left who knows about that."

"What underground passage? I don't know what you are talking about."

"That was in old times, when the Tourgue was besieged. The people inside could escape through an underground passage which opened into the woods."

"I know there are subterranean passages of that kind in the châteaux of Jupellière and Hunaudaye, and in the tower of Champéon; but there is nothing like it in the Tourgue."

"But indeed there is, monseigneur. I do not know the passages of which monseigneur speaks; I only know the one in the Tourgue because I belong in the neighborhood; and

besides, I am the only one who does know of it. It was never spoken of. It was forbidden, because this passage had been used in the wars of M. de Rohan. My father knew the secret and showed it to me. I know both the secret entrance and the outlet. If I am in the forest I can go into the tower; and if I am in the tower I can go into the forest without being seen, so that when the enemies enter there is no one to be found. That is the passage of the Tourgue. Oh, I know it well."

The old man remained silent for a moment.

"You must be mistaken. If there had been any such secret I should have known it."

"Monseigneur, I am sure of it. There is a stone that turns."

"Oh, yes! You peasants believe in turning-stones, in singing-stones, and in stones that go by night down to a neighboring brook to drink. A pack of idle tales!"

"But when I turned the stone myself—"

"Yes, just as others have heard it sing. My friend, the Tourgue is a Bastille, safe and strong, and easily defended; but he would be a simpleton indeed who depended for escape on a subterranean passage."

"But, monseigneur—"

The old man shrugged his shoulders,—

"Let us waste no more time, but speak of business."

This peremptory tone checked Halmalo's persistence.

The old man resumed:—

"Let us go on. Listen. From Rougefeu you are to go into the wood of Montchevrier, where you will find Bénédicité, the leader of the Twelve. He is another good man. He recites his *Bénédicite* while he has people shot. There is no room for sensibility in warfare. From Montchevrier you will go—"

He broke off.

"I had forgotten about the money."

He took from his pocket a purse and a pocket-book, which he put into Halmalo's hands.

"In this pocket-book you will find thirty thousand francs in paper money, which is worth about three livres and ten sous. The assignats are false, to be sure, but the real

ones are no more valuable; and in this purse, mind, you will find one hundred louis d'ors. I give you all I have, because I have no need of anything here, and it is better that no money should be found on me. Now I will go on. From Montchevrier you are to go to Antrain, where you will meet M. de Frotté; from Antrain to Jupellière, where you Will see M. de Rochecotte; from Jupellière to Noirieux, where you will find the Abbé Baudoin. Will you remember all this?"

"As I do my Pater Noster."

"You will see M. Dubois-Guy at Saint-Brice-en-Cogle, M. de Turpin at Morannes, which is a fortified town, and the Prince de Talmont at Château-Gonthier."

"Will a prince speak to me?"

"Am I not speaking to you?"

Halmalo took off his hat.

"You need but to show Madam's fleur-de-lis, and your welcome is assured. Remember that you will have to go to places where there are mountaineers and *patauds*.[1] You will disguise yourself. That is an easy matter, since the republicans are so stupid that with a blue coat, a three-cornered hat, and a cockade, you may go anywhere. The day of regiments and uniforms has gone by; the regiments are not even numbered, and every man is at liberty to wear any rag he fancies. You will go to Saint-Mhervé. You will see Gaulier, called Grand-Pierre. You will go to the cantonment of Parné, where all the men have swarthy faces. They put gravel in their muskets and use a double charge of powder to make more noise. They do well; but be sure and tell them to kill, kill, and kill. You will go to the camp of the Vache-Noire, which is an elevation in the midst of the forest of La Charnie, from Vache-Noire to the camp of l'Avoine, then to the camp Vert, and afterwards to the camp of the Fourmis. You will go to Grand-Bordage, also called Haut-du-Pré, where lives the widow whose daughter married Treton the Englishman; that is in the parish of Quelaines. You will visit Épineux-le-Chevreuil, Sillé-le-Guillaume, Guillaume, Parannes, and all the men in hiding throughout the woods. You will make friends and you will send them to the borders of upper and lower Maine; you will see Jean Treton in the parish of Vaisges, Sans-Regret in Bignon, Chambord in Bonchamps, the Corbin brothers at Maisoncelles, and Petit-Sans-Peur at Saint-Jean-sur-Evre. He is the one who is called Bourdoiseau. Having done this, and uttered the watchwords, 'Revolt!' 'No quarter!' in all these places, you will join the royal and catholic grand army, wherever it may be. You will see d'Elbée, de Lescure, de la Rochejaquelein, and such leaders as may still be living. You will show them my commander's knot. They know what it means. You are only a sailor, but Cathelineau is

nothing but a teamster. You will give them this message from me: It is time to join the two wars, the great and the small. The great one makes more noise, but the small one does the work. The Vendée does fairly well, but Chouannerie goes farther, and in civil war cruelty is a powerful agent. The success of a war depends on the amount of evil that it causes."

He broke off.

"Halmalo, I tell you all this, not that you can understand the words, but because your perceptions are keen, and you will comprehend the matters themselves. I have trusted you since I saw you managing that boat. Without knowing anything of geometry you execute wonderful sea manoeuvres. He who can pilot a boat can guide an insurrection. Judging from the way in which you managed our affair at sea, I feel sure that you will execute my instructions equally well. But to resume: So you will repeat to the chiefs all that I have told you, or words to the same effect, as near as you can remember; I am confident that you will convey to them my meaning. I prefer the warfare of the forest to that of the open field. I have no intention of exposing one hundred thousand peasants to the grape-shot of the soldiers in blue and the artillery of M. Carnot. In a month's time I expect to have five hundred sharp-shooters hidden in the woods. The republican army is my game. Poaching is one method of warfare. The strategy of the thickets for me! Ah, that is probably another word which you will not understand; but never mind,—you know what I mean when I say, No quarter! and ambushes on every side! Give me more Chouannerie rather than the regular Vendean warfare. You will add that the English are on our side. Let us catch the republic between two fires. Europe helps us: let us put down revolution. Kings are waging a war of kingdoms: we will wage a war of parishes. You will say all this. Do you understand me?"

"Yes: put all to fire and sword."

"That is it,"

"No quarter."

"None whatever. You understand?"

"I will go everywhere."

"And be always on your guard; for in these parts it is an easy matter to lose one's life."

"Death I have no fear of. He who takes his first step may be wearing his last shoes."

"You are a brave fellow."

"And if I am asked monseigneur's name?"

"It is not to be made known yet. You are to say that you do not know it, and you will say the truth."

"Where shall I see monseigneur again?"

"At the place where I am going."

"How shall I know where that is?"

"All the world will know it. Before eight days have gone by you will hear of me. I shall make examples; I shall avenge the king and religion; and you will know well enough that it is I of whom they are speaking."

"I understand."

"Do not forget anything."

"You may rest assured of that."

"Now go, and may God guide you! Go!"

"I will do all you bid me. I will go; I will speak; I will obey; I will command."

"Good."

"And if I succeed—"

"I will make you a knight of Saint-Louis."

"Like my brother. And if I fail, you will have me shot?"

"Like your brother."

"So be it, monseigneur."

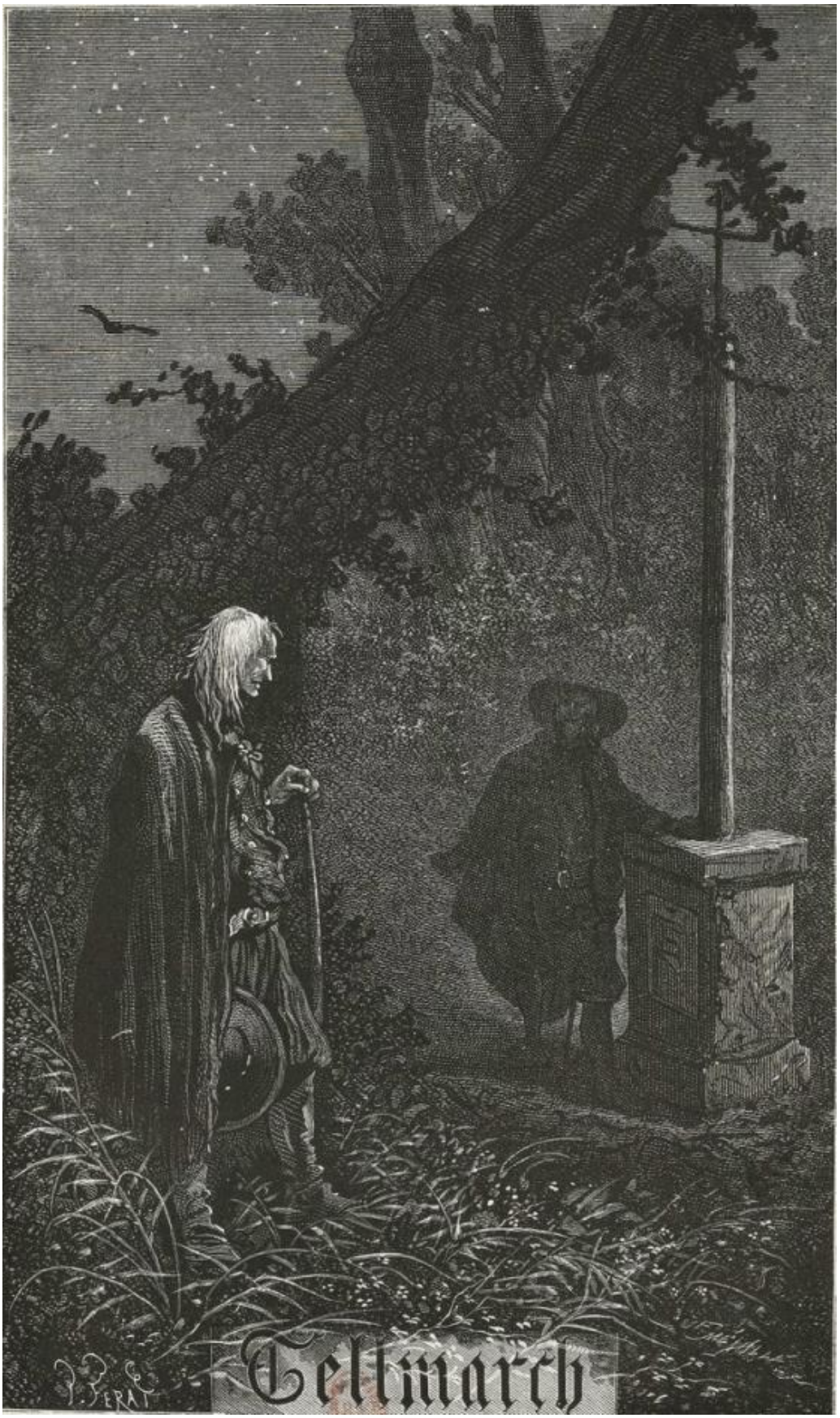
The old man bent his head, and seemed to fall into a gloomy reverie. When he raised his eyes he was alone. Halmalo was only a black speck vanishing on the horizon.

The sun had just set; the sea-mews and hooded gulls were flying homeward from the ocean, and the atmosphere was charged with that well-known restlessness that precedes the night; the tree-frogs croaked, the kingfishers flew whistling from the pools, the gulls and rooks kept up their usual evening clamor, and the shore-birds called to each other, but not a human sound was to be heard. It was absolute solitude,—not a sail on the bay, not a peasant in the fields; only a bleak expanse as far as the eye could reach. The tall sand-thistles quivered; the pale twilight sky shed a

livid light over all the shore; and the ponds far away on the dark plain looked like sheets of pewter laid flat upon the ground. A sea-wind was blowing.

---

[1]A name given by the Chouans to the republicans, a corruption of patriot.—TR.


Gellmarch

BOOK IV.

TELLMARCH.

I.

ON THE TOP OF THE DUNE.

The old man waited until Halmalo was out of sight; then drawing his sea-cloak more closely around him, he started walking slowly, wrapt in thought. He took the direction of Huisnes; Halmalo had gone towards Beauvoir.

Behind him rose the enormous triangle of Mont Saint-Michel, with its cathedral tiara and its cuirass-like fortress, whose two great eastern towers—the one round, the other square—help the mountain to bear up under the burden of the church and the

village. As the pyramid of Cheops is a landmark in the desert, so is Mont-Saint Michel a beacon to the sea.

The quicksands in the bay of Mont Saint-Michel act imperceptibly upon the dunes. At that time between Huisnes and Ardevon there was a very high one, which is no longer in existence. This dune, levelled by an equinoctial gale, was unusually old, and on its summit stood a milestone, erected in the twelfth century in memory of the council held at Avranches against the assassins of Saint Thomas of Canterbury. From its top one could see all the surrounding country, and ascertain the points of the compass.

The old man directed his steps to this dune, and ascended it.

When he reached the summit, he seated himself on one of the four projecting stones, and leaning back against the monument, began to examine the land that lay spread out like a geographical map at his feet. He seemed to be looking for a route in a country that had once been familiar to him. In this broad landscape, obscured by the twilight, nothing was distinctly visible but the dark line of the horizon against the pale sky.

One could see the clustered roofs of eleven hamlets and villages; and all the belfries of the coast were visible several miles away, standing high that they might serve as beacons to the sailors in time of need.

Some minutes later the old man seemed to have found what he was looking for in this dim light; his eye rested on an enclosure of trees, walls, and roofs, partially visible between the valley and the wood: it was a farm. He nodded his head with an expression of satisfaction, like one who says to himself, "There it is!" and began to trace with his finger the outlines of a route across the hedges and the fields. From time to time he gazed intently at a shapeless and somewhat indistinct object that was moving above the principal roof of the farm, and seemed to ask himself what it could be. It was colorless and dim, in consequence of the time of day. It was not a weather-vane, because it was floating; and there seemed to be no reason why it should be a flag.

He felt weary; and grateful to rest on the stone where he was sitting, he yielded to that vague sense of oblivion which the first moment of repose brings to weary men. There is one hour of the day which may be called noiseless,—the peaceful hour of early evening; that hour had come, and he was enjoying it. He gazed, he listened. To what? To perfect tranquillity. Even savage natures have their moments of melancholy. Suddenly this tranquillity was—not exactly disturbed, but sharply defined by the voices of those who were passing below. They were the voices of women and children.

It was like a joyous chime of bells heard unexpectedly in the darkness. The group from which the voices came could not be distinguished, on account of the underbrush; but it was evident that the persons were walking along the foot of the dune, in the direction of the plain and the forest. As those clear, fresh voices reached the old man where he sat absorbed in thought, they were so near that he lost not a word.

A woman's voice said,—

"Let us hurry, Flécharde. Is this the way?"

"No; it is over yonder."

And the dialogue went on between the two voices, the one high and shrill, the other low and timid.

"What is the name of this farm where we are living now?"

"Herbe-en-Pail."

"Are we still far from it?"

"Fully a quarter of an hour."

"Let us make haste and get there in time for the soup."

"Yes, I know we are late."

"We ought to run; but your mites are tired. We are only two women, and cannot carry three brats. And then, you, Flécharde, you are carrying one as it is,—a perfect lump of lead. You have weaned that little gormandizer, and you still carry it. That is a bad habit; you had better make it walk. Well, the soup will be cold,—worse luck!"

"Ah, what good shoes you gave me! They fit as though they were made for me."

"It's better than going barefooted."

"Do hurry, René-Jean."

"He is the one who makes us late; he has had to stop and speak to all the little village girls that we meet He behaves like a man already."

"Of course he does; he is going on five years old."

"Tell us, René-Jean, why did you speak to that little girl in the village?"

A child's voice, that of a boy, replied,—

"Because I know her."

"How is that? You know her?" said the woman.

"Yes," answered the boy; "because we played games this morning."

"Well, I must say!" exclaimed the woman. "We have been here only three days; a boy no bigger than your fist, and he has found a sweetheart already!"

And the voices grew fainter in the distance, and every sound died away.

II.

AURES HABET, ET NON AUDIET.

The old man sat motionless. He was not consciously thinking, nor yet was he dreaming. Around him was peace, repose, assurance of safety, solitude. Although night had shut down upon the woods, and in the valley below it was nearly dark, broad daylight still rested on the dune. The moon was rising in the east, and several stars pricked the pale blue of the zenith. This man, although intensely absorbed in his own interests, surrendered himself to the unutterable peacefulness of nature. He felt the vague dawn of hope rising in his breast,—if the word "hope" may fitly be applied to projects of civil warfare. For the moment it seemed to him that in escaping from the inexorable sea he had left all danger behind him. No one knew his name; he was alone,—lost, as far as concerned the enemy; he had left no traces behind him, for the surface of the sea preserves no trace; all is hidden, ignored, and never even suspected. He felt unspeakably calm. A little more, and he would have fallen asleep.

It was the deep silence pervading both heaven and earth that lent to the hour a subtle charm to soothe the imagination of this man, stirred as he was by inward and outward agitations.

There was nothing to be heard but the wind blowing in from the sea, a prolonged monotonous bass, to which the ear becomes so used that it almost ceases to be noticed as a sound.

All at once he rose to his feet

His attention was suddenly awakened. An object on the horizon seemed to arrest his glance.

He was gazing at the belfry of Cormeray, at the farther end of the valley. Something unusual was going on in this belfry.

Its dark silhouette was clearly defined against the sky; the tower surmounted by the spire could be seen distinctly, and between the tower and the spire was the square cage for the bell, without a penthouse, and open on the four sides, after the fashion of Breton belfries. Now this cage seemed to open and shut by turns, and at regular intervals; its lofty aperture looked now perfectly white, and the next moment black,

the sky constantly appearing and vanishing, eclipse following the light, as the opening and shutting succeeded each other with the regularity of a hammer striking an anvil.

This belfry of Cormeray lay before him at a distance of some two leagues. He looked towards the right in the direction of the belfry of Baguer-Pican, which also rose straight against the horizon, and the cage of that belfry was opening and closing like the belfry of Cormeray. He looked towards the left at the belfry of Tanis; the cage of Tanis opened and closed like that of Baguer-Pican. He examined all the belfries on the horizon, one after another,—the belfries of Courtils, of Précey, of Crollon, and of Croix-Avranchin on his right hand, those of Raz-sur-Couesnon, of Mordray, and of the Pas on his left, and before him the belfry of Pontorson. Every belfry cage was changing alternately from white to black.

What could it mean?

It meant that all the bells were ringing, and they must be ringing violently to cause the light to change so rapidly.

What was it, then? The tocsin, beyond a doubt. They were ringing, and frantically too, from all the belfries, in every parish, and in every village, and yet not a sound could be heard.

This was owing to the distance, combined with the sea-wind, which, blowing from the opposite direction, carried all sounds from the shore away beyond the horizon.

All these frantic bells ringing on every side, and at the same time this silence; what could be more appalling?

The old man looked and listened.

He could not hear the tocsin, but he could see it. Seeing the tocsin is rather a strange sensation.

Against whom was this fury directed?

Against whom was the tocsin ringing?

III.

THE USEFULNESS OF BIG LETTERS.

Some one was surely caught in a trap.

Who could it be?

A shudder shook this man of steel.

It could not be he. His arrival could not have been discovered. It was impossible for the representatives to have learned it already, for he had but just stepped on shore. The corvette had surely foundered with all on board; and even on the corvette Boisberthelot and La Vieuville were the only men who knew his name.

The bells kept up their savage sport. He counted them mechanically, and in the abrupt transition from the assurance of perfect safety to a terrible sense of danger, his thoughts wandered restlessly from one conjecture to another. However, after all, this ringing might be accounted for in many different ways, and he finally reassured himself by repeating, "In short, no one knows of my arrival here, or even my name."

For several minutes there had been a slight noise overhead and behind him,—a sound resembling the rustling of a leaf; at first he took no notice of it, but as it continued, persisted, one might almost say, he finally turned. It was really a leaf,—a leaf of paper. The wind was struggling to tear off a large placard that was pasted on the milestone above his head. The placard had but just been pasted; for it was still moist, and had become a prey to the wind, which in its sport had partly detached it.

The old man had not perceived it, because he had ascended the dune on the opposite side.

He stepped up on the stone where he had been sitting, and placed his hand on the corner of the placard that fluttered in the wind. The sky was clear; in June the twilight lasts a long time, and although it was dark at the foot of the dune, the summit was still light. A part of the notice was printed in large letters; it was yet sufficiently light to read it, and this was what he read:—

THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, ONE AND INDIVISIBLE.

We, Prieur of the Marne, representative of the people, in command of the army on the coast of Cherbourg, give notice, That the ci-devant Marquis of Lantenac, Viscount of Fontenay, calling himself a Breton prince, and who has secretly landed on the coast of Granville, is outlawed. A price has been set upon his head. Whoever captures him dead or alive will receive sixty thousand livres. This sum will be paid in gold, and not in paper money. A battalion of the army of the coast guards of Cherbourg will be at once despatched for the apprehension of the former Marquis of Lantenac. The inhabitants of the parishes are ordered to lend their aid.

Given at the Town Hall of Granville the second of June, 1793.

Signed:

PRIEUR, DE LA MARNE.

Below this name there was another signature written in smaller characters, which the fading light prevented him from deciphering. Pulling his hat down over his eyes, and muffling himself in his sea-cape up to his chin, the old man hastily descended the dune. Evidently it was not safe to tarry any longer on this lighted summit.

Perhaps he had stayed there too long already. The top of the dune was the only point of the landscape that still remained visible.

When he had descended and found himself in the darkness he slackened his pace.

He took the road leading to the farm which he had traced out, evidently believing himself safe in that direction. It was absolute solitude. There were no passers-by at this hour.

Stopping behind a clump of bushes, he unfastened his cloak, turned his waistcoat with the hairy side out, refastened his cloak, that was but a rag held by a string around his neck, and resumed his journey.

It was bright moonlight.

He came to a place where two roads forked, and on the pedestal of the old stone cross which stood there a white square could be distinguished,—undoubtedly another placard like the one he had lately read. As he drew near to it he heard a voice.

"Where are you going?" it said; and turning he beheld a man in the hedge-row, tall like himself, and of about the same age, with hair as white and garments even more ragged than his own,—almost his very double.

The man stood leaning on a long staff.

"I asked you where you were going? he repeated.

"In the first place, tell me where I am," was the reply, uttered in tones of almost haughty composure.

And the man answered,—

"You are in the seigneury of Tanis, of which I am the beggar and you the lord."

"I?"

"Yes, you,—monsieur le marquis de Lantenac."

IV.

THE CAIMAND.

The Marquis de Lantenac (henceforth we shall call him by his name) replied gravely,—

"Very well. Then deliver me up."

The man continued,—

"We are both at home here,—you in the castle, I in the bushes."

"Let us put an end to this. Do what you have to do. Deliver me to the authorities," said the Marquis.

The man went on,—

"You were going to the farm Herbe-en-Pail, were you not?"

"Yes."

"Don't go there."

"Why not?"

"Because the Blues are there."

"How long have they been there?"

"These three days past."

"Did the inhabitants of the farm and village resist?"

"No; they opened all the doors."

"Ah!" said the Marquis.

The man indicated with his finger the roof of the farm, which was visible in the distance above the trees.

"Do you see that roof, Marquis?"

"Yes."

"Do you see what there is above it?"

"Something waving?"

"Yes."

"It is a flag."

"The tricolor," said the man.

It was the object that had attracted the attention of the Marquis when he stood on the top of the dune.

"Isn't the tocsin ringing?" inquired the Marquis.

"Yes."

"On what account?"

"Evidently on yours."

"But one cannot hear it?"

"The wind prevents it from being heard."

The man continued,—

"Did you see that notice about yourself?"

"Yes."

"They are searching for you."

Then glancing towards the farm, he added,—

"They have a demi-battalion over there."

"Of republicans?"

"Of Parisians."

"Well," said the Marquis, "let us go on."

And he made a step in the direction of the farm. The man seized him by the arm.

"Don't go there!"

"Where would you have me go?"

"With me."

The Marquis looked at the beggar.

"Listen to me, Marquis: My home is not a fine one, but it is safe,—a hut lower than a cellar, seaweed for a floor, and for a ceiling a roof of branches and of grass. Come. They would shoot you at the farm, and at my house you will have a chance to sleep; you must be weary. To-morrow the Blues start out again, and you can go where you choose."

The Marquis studied the man.

"On which side are you, then?" asked the Marquis. "Are you a royalist, or a republican?"

"I am a beggar."

"Neither royalist nor republican?"

"I believe not."

"Are you for or against the king?"

"I have no time for that sort of thing."

"What do you think of what is transpiring?"

"I think that I have not enough to live on."

"Yet you come to my aid."

"I knew that you were outlawed. What is this law, then, that one can be outside of it? I do not understand. Am I inside the law, or outside of it? I have no idea. Does dying of hunger mean being inside the law?"

"How long have you been dying of hunger?"

"All my life."

"And you propose to save me?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I said to myself, 'There is a man who is poorer than I, for he has not even the right to breathe.'"

"True. And so you mean to save me?"

"Certainly. Now we are brothers, my lord,—beggars both; I for bread, and you for life."

"But do you know there is a price set on my head?"

"Yes."

"How did you know it?"

"I have read the notice."

"Then you can read?"

"Yes, and write also. Did you think I was like the beasts of the field?"

"But since you can read, and have seen the notice, you must know that he who delivers me up will receive sixty thousand francs."

"I know it."

"Not in assignats."

"Yes, I know,—in gold."

"You realize that sixty thousand francs is a fortune?"

"Yes."

"And that the man who arrests me will make his fortune?"

"Yes; and what then?"

"His fortune!"

"That is exactly what I thought. When I saw you, I said to myself, 'To think that whoever arrests this man will earn sixty thousand francs, and make his fortune! Let us make haste to hide him.'"

The Marquis followed the beggar.

They entered a thicket. There was the beggar's den, a sort of chamber in which a large and ancient oak had allowed the man to take up his abode; it was hollowed out under its roots, and covered with its branches,—dark, low, hidden, actually invisible,—and in it there was room for two.

"I foresaw that I might have a guest," said the beggar.

This kind of subterranean lodging, less rare in Brittany than one might imagine, is called a *carnichot*. The same name is also given to hiding-places built in thick walls. The place was furnished with a few jugs, a bed of straw or sea-weed, washed and dried, a coarse kersey blanket, and a few tallow dips, together with a flint and steel, and twigs of furze to be used as matches.

They stooped, crawling for a moment, and penetrated into a chamber divided by the thick roots of the tree into fantastic compartments, and seated themselves on the heap of dry sea-weed that served as a bed. The space between the two roots through which they had entered, and which served as a door, admitted a certain amount of light. Night had fallen; but the human eye adapts itself to the change of light, and even in the darkness it sometimes seems as if the daylight lingered still. The reflection of a moonbeam illumined the entrance. In the corner was a jug of water, a loaf of buckwheat bread, and some chestnuts.

"Let us sup," said the beggar.

They divided the chestnuts; the Marquis gave his bit of hard-tack; they ate of the same black loaf, and drank in turn out of the same jug of water, meanwhile conversing.

The Marquis questioned the man.

"So it is all one to you, whatever happens?"

"Pretty much. It is for you who are lords to look out for that sort of business."

"But then, what is going on now, for instance—"

"It is all going on over my head."

The beggar added,—

"Besides, there are things happening still higher; the sun rises, the moon waxes and wanes. That is the kind of thing that interests me."

He took a swallow from the jug and said,—

"Good fresh water!"

Then he continued,—

"How do you like this water, my lord?"

"What is your name?" asked the Marquis.

"My name is Tellmarch, but they call me the Caimand."

"I understand. *Caimand* is a local word."

"Which means beggar. I am also called Le Vieux."

He went on,—

"I have been called Le Vieux for forty years."

"Forty years! But you must have been young then!"

"I was never young. You are young still, Marquis. You have the legs of a man of twenty; you can climb the great dune, while I can hardly walk. A quarter of a mile tires me out. Yet we are of the same age; but the rich have an advantage over us,—they eat every day. Eating keeps up one's strength."

After a silence the beggar went on:—

"Wealth and poverty,—there's the mischief; it seems to me that that is the cause of all these catastrophes. The poor want to be rich, and the rich do not want to become poor. I think that is at the bottom of it all, but I do not trouble myself about such matters; let come what may, I am neither for the creditor nor for the debtor. I know that there is a debt, and somebody is paying it; that is all. I would rather they had not killed the king, and yet I hardly know why. And then one says to me, 'Think how they used to hang people for nothing at all! Think of it! For a miserable shot fired at one of the king's deer, I once saw a man hung: he had a wife and seven children.' There is something to be said on both sides."

He was silent again, then resumed:—

"Of course you understand. I do not pretend to know just how matters stand; men go to and fro, changes take place, while I live beneath the stars."

Again Tellmarch became thoughtful, then went on:—

"I know something of bone-setting and medicine. I am familiar with herbs and the use of plants; the peasants see me preoccupied for no apparent reason, and so I pass for a wizard. Because I dream, they think that I am wise."

"Do you belong to the neighborhood?" asked the Marquis.

"I have never left it."

"Do you know me?"

"Certainly. The last time I saw you, you were passing through this part of the country on your way to England; that was two years ago. Just now I saw a man on the top of the dune,—a tall man. Tall men are not common hereabouts; Brittany is a country of short men. I looked more closely; I had read the notice, and I said to myself, 'See here!' And when you came down, the moon was up and I recognized you."

"But I do not know you,"

"You have looked at me, but you never saw me." And Tellmarch the Caimand added,—

"I saw you. The passer-by and the beggar look with different eyes."

"Have I ever met you before?"

"Often, for I am your beggar. I used to beg on the road, below your castle. Sometimes you gave me alms; he who gives takes no notice, but he who receives looks anxiously and observes well. A beggar is a born spy. But though I am often sad, I try not to be a malicious spy. I used to hold out my hand, and you saw nothing but that, into which you threw the alms that I needed in the morning to keep me from dying of hunger at night. Frequently I went twenty-four hours without food. Sometimes a penny means life itself. I am paying you now for the life I owe you."

"True, you are saving my life."

"Yes, I am saving your life, monseigneur."

The voice of Tellmarch grew solemn:—

"On one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you have not come here to do harm."

"I have come here to do good."

"Let us sleep," said the beggar.

They lay down side by side on the bed of sea-weed. The beggar dropped to sleep at once. The Marquis, although much fatigued, remained awake for some time, thinking and watching his companion in the darkness; finally he lay back. Lying upon the bed was equivalent to lying on the earth, and he took advantage of this to put his ear to the ground and listen. He could hear a hollow subterranean rumbling. It is a fact that

sound is transmitted into the bowels of the earth; he could hear the ringing of the bells.

The tocsin continued.

The Marquis fell asleep.

V.

WHEN HE AWOKE IT WAS DAYLIGHT.

The beggar was standing up,—not in his den, for it was impossible to stand erect there, but outside on the threshold. He was leaning on his staff, and the sunshine fell upon his face.

"Monseigneur," said Tellmarch, "it has just struck four from the belfry of Tanis. I heard it strike,—therefore the wind has changed; it comes from the land, and as I heard no other sound the tocsin must have ceased. All is quiet at the farm and in the village of Herbe-en-Pail. The Blues are either sleeping or gone. The worst of the danger is over; it will be prudent for us to separate. This is my time for going out."

He indicated a point in the horizon.

"I am going this way;" then pointing in the opposite direction, he said,—

"You are to go that way."

The beggar gravely waved his hand to the Marquis.

"Take those chestnuts with you, if you are hungry," he added, pointing to the remains of the supper.

A moment after he had disappeared among the trees.

The Marquis rose and went in the direction indicated by Tellmarch.

It was that charming hour called in the old Norman peasant dialect the "peep of day." The chirping of the finches and of the hedge-sparrows was heard. The Marquis followed the path that they had traversed the day before, and as he emerged from the thicket he found himself at the fork of the roads marked by the stone cross. The placard was still there, looking white and almost festive in the rising sun. He remembered that there was something at the foot of this notice that he had not been able to read the evening before, on account of the small characters and the fading

light. He went up to the pedestal of the cross. Below the signature "Prieur, de la Marne," the notice ended with the following lines in small characters:—

The identity of the ci-devant Marquis of Lantenac having been established, he will be executed without delay.

Signed:
GAUVAIN,
Chief of Battalion in Command of Exploring Column.

"Gauvain!" said the Marquis.

He paused, wrapt in deep thought, his eyes fixed on the placard.

"Gauvain!" he repeated.

He started once more, turned, looked at the cross, came back, and read the placard over again.

Then he slowly walked away. Had any one been near, he might have heard him mutter to himself in an undertone:—

"Gauvain!"

The roofs of the farm on his left were not visible from the sunken paths through which he was stealing. He skirted a precipitous hill, covered with blossoming furze, of the species known as the thorny furze. This eminence was crowned by one of those points of land called in this district a *hure*,[1] and at its base the trees cut off the view at once. The foliage seemed bathed in light. All Nature felt the deep joy of morning.

Suddenly this landscape became terrible. It was like the explosion of an ambuscade. An indescribable tornado of wild cries and musket-shots fell upon these fields and woods all radiant with the morning light, and from the direction of the farm rose a dense smoke mingled with bright flames, as though the village and the farm were but a truss of burning straw. It was not only startling but awful,—this sudden change from peace to wrath; like an explosion of hell in the very midst of dawn, a horror without transition. A fight was going on in the direction of Herbe-en-Pail. The Marquis paused.

No man in a case like this could have helped feeling as he did; curiosity is more powerful than fear. One must find out what is going on, even at the risk of life. He climbed the hill at the foot of which lay the sunken path. From there, although the chances were that he would be discovered, he could at least see what was taking place. In a few moments he stood on the *hure* and looked about him. In fact, there was both a fusillade and a fire. One could hear the cries and see the fire. The farm was

evidently the centre of some mysterious catastrophe. What could it be? Was it attacked? And if so, by whom? Could it be a battle? Was it not more likely to be a military execution? By the orders of a revolutionary decree the Blues frequently punished refractory farms and villages by setting them on fire. For instance, every farm and hamlet which had neglected to fell the trees as prescribed by law, and had not opened roads in the thickets for the passage of republican cavalry, was burned. It was not long since the parish of Bourgon near Ernée had been thus punished. Was Herbe-en-Pail a case in point? It was evident that none of those strategic openings ordered by the decree had been cut, either in the thickets or in the environs of Tanis and Herbe-en-Pail. Was this the punishment thereof? Had an order been received by the advanced guard occupying the farm? Did not this advanced guard form a part of one of those exploring columns called *colonnes infernales*?

The eminence on which the Marquis had stationed himself was surrounded on all sides by a wild and bristling thicket called the grove of Herbe-en-Pail; it was about as large as a forest, however, and extended to the farm, concealing, as all Breton thickets do, a network of ravines, paths, and sunken roads,—labyrinths wherein the republican armies frequently went astray.

This execution, if execution it were, must have been a fierce one, for it had been rapid. Like all brutal deeds, it had been done like a flash. The atrocity of civil war admits of these savage deeds. While the Marquis, vainly conjecturing, and hesitating whether to descend or to remain, listened and watched, this crash of extermination ceased, or, to speak more accurately, vanished. The Marquis could see the fierce and jubilant troop as it scattered through the grove. There was a dreadful rushing to and fro beneath the trees. From the farm they had entered the woods. Drums beat an attack, but there was no more firing. It was like a *battue*; they seemed to be following a scent. They were evidently looking for some one; the noise was wide-spread and far-reaching. There were confused outcries of wrath and triumph, a clamor of indistinct sounds. Suddenly, as an outline is revealed in a cloud of smoke, one sound became clearly defined and audible in this tumult. It was a name, repeated by thousands of voices, and the Marquis distinctly heard the cry,—

"Lantenac, Lantenac! The Marquis of Lantenac!" They were looking for him.

VI.

THE VICISSITUDES OF CIVIL WAR.

Around him suddenly, from all directions, the thicket was filled with muskets, bayonets, and sabres, a tricolored banner was unfurled in the dim light, and the cry, "Lantenac!" burst forth on his ears, while at his feet through the brambles and branches savage faces appeared.

The Marquis was standing alone on the top of the height, visible from every part of the wood. He could scarcely distinguish those who shouted his name, but he could be seen by all. Had there been a thousand muskets in the wood, he offered them a target. He could distinguish nothing in the coppice, but the fiery eyes of all were directed upon him.

He took off his hat, turned back the brim, and drawing from his pocket a white cockade, he pulled out a long dry thorn from a furze-bush, with which he fastened the cockade to the brim of his hat, then replaced it on his head, the upturned brim revealing his forehead and the cockade, and in a loud voice, as though addressing the wide forest, he said:—

"I am the man you seek. I am the Marquis de Lantenac, Viscount de Fontenay, Breton Prince, Lieutenant-General of the armies of the king. Make an end of it. Aim! Fire!"

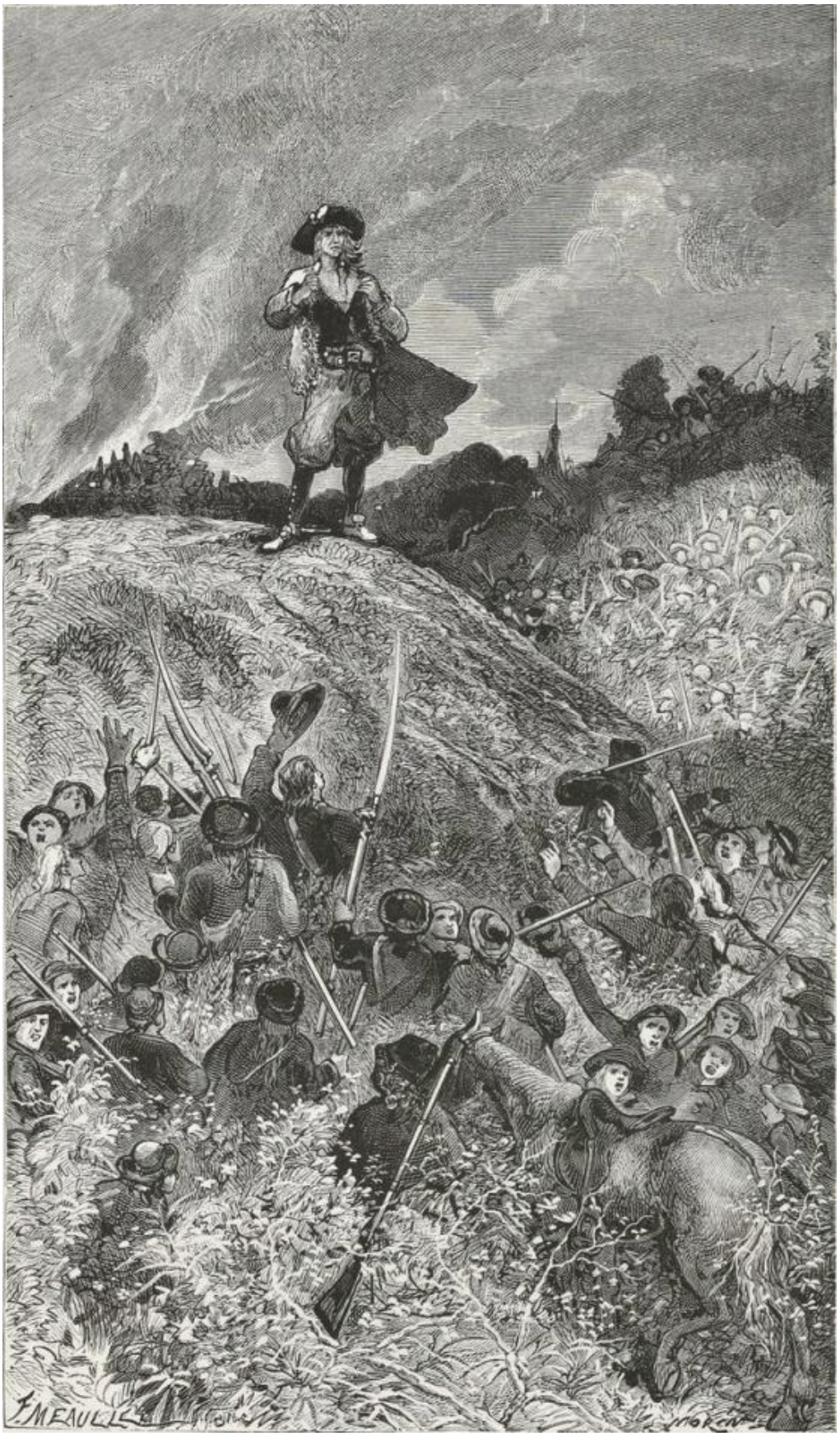
And opening with both hands his goat-skin waistcoat, he bared his breast.

Lowering his eyes to see the levelled guns, he beheld himself surrounded by kneeling men.

A great shout went up,—"Long live Lantenac! Long live our lord! Long live the General!"

At the same time hats were thrown up and sabres whirled joyously, while from all sides brown woollen caps hoisted on long poles were waving in the air.

A Vendean band surrounded him.


F. MEAULLE

At the sight of him they fell on their knees.

Legends tell us that the ancient Thuringian forests were inhabited by strange beings,—a race of giants, at once superior and inferior to men,—whom the Romans regarded as horrible beasts, and the Germans as divine incarnations, and who might chance to be exterminated or worshipped according to the race they encountered.

A sensation similar to that which may have been felt by one of those beings was experienced by the Marquis when, expecting to be treated like a monster, he was suddenly worshipped as a deity.

All those flashing eyes were fastened upon him with a kind of savage love.

The crowd were armed with guns, sabres, scythes, poles, and sticks. All wore large felt hats or brown caps, with white cockades, a profusion of rosaries and charms, wide breeches left open at the knee, jackets of skin, and leather gaiters; the calves of their legs were bare, and they wore their hair long; some looked fierce, but all had frank and open countenances.

A young man of noble bearing passed through the crowd of kneeling men and hastily approached the Marquis. He wore a felt hat with an upturned brim, a white cockade, and a skin jacket, like the peasants; but his hands were delicate and his linen was fine, and over his waistcoat was a white silk scarf, from which hung a sword with a golden hilt.

Having reached the *hure*, he threw aside his hat, unfastened his scarf, and kneeling, presented to the Marquis both scarf and sword.

"Indeed we were seeking for you," he said, "and we have found you. Receive the sword of command. These men are yours now. I was their commander; now am I promoted, since I become your soldier. Accept our devotion, my lord. General, give me your orders."

At a sign from him, men carrying the tricolored banner came forth from the woods, and going up to the Marquis, placed it at his feet. It was the one he had seen through the trees.

"General," said the young man who presented the sword and the scarf, "this is the flag which we took from the Blues who held the farm Herbe-en-Pail. My name is Gavard, my lord. I was with the Marquis de la Rouarie."

"Very well," said the Marquis.

And calm and composed he girded on the scarf.

Then he pulled out his sword, and waving it above his head, he cried,—

"Rise! And long live the king!"

All started to their feet. Then from the depth of the woods arose a tumultuous and triumphant cry,—

"Long live the king! Long live our Marquis! Long live Lantenac!"

The Marquis turned towards Gavard.

"How many are you?"

"Seven thousand."

While they were descending the hill, the peasants clearing away the furze-bushes to make a path for the Marquis de Lantenac, Gavard continued:—

"All this may be explained in a word, my lord: nothing could be more simple. It needed but a spark. The republican placard in revealing your presence has roused the country for the king. Besides, we have been secretly notified by the mayor of Granville, who is one of us,—the same who saved the Abbé Ollivier. They rang the tocsin last night."

"For whom?"

"For you."

"Ah!" said the Marquis.

"And here we are," continued Gavard.

"And you number seven thousand?"

"To-day. But we shall be fifteen thousand to-morrow. It is the Breton contingent. When Monsieur Henri de la Rochejaquelein went to join the catholic army they sounded the tocsin, and in one night six parishes—Isernay, Corqueux, Échaubroignes, Aubiers, Sainte Aubin, and Nueil—sent him ten thousand men. They had no munitions of war, but having found at a quarryman's house sixty pounds of blasting-powder, Monsieur de la Rochejaquelein took his departure with that. We felt sure you must be somewhere in these woods, and we were looking for you."

"And you attacked the Blues at the farm Herbe-en-Pail?"

"The wind prevented them from hearing the tocsin, and they mistrusted nothing; the population of the hamlet, a set of clowns, received them well. This morning we invested the farm while the Blues were sleeping, and the thing was over in a trice. I have a horse here; will you deign to accept it, general?"

"Yes."

A peasant led up a white horse with military housings. The Marquis mounted him without accepting Gavard's proffered assistance.

"Hurrah!" cried the peasants. The English fashion of cheering is much in vogue on the Breton coast, for the people have continual dealings with the Channel islands.

Gavard made the military salute, asking, as he did so, "Where will you establish your headquarters, my lord?"

"At first, in the forest of Fougères."

"It is one of the seven forests belonging to you."

"We need a priest."

"We have one."

"Who is it?"

"The curate of the Chapelle-Erbrée."

"I know him. He has made the trip to Jersey." A priest stepped out from the ranks and said,—

"Three times."

The Marquis turned his head.

"Good morning, Monsieur le Curé. There is work in store for you."

"So much the better, Monsieur le Marquis."

"You will have to hear the confessions of such as desire your services. No one will be forced."

"Marquis," said the priest, "at Guéménée, Gaston compels the republicans to confess."

"He is a hairdresser. The dying should be allowed free choice in such a matter."

Gavard, who had gone away to give certain orders, now returned.

"I await your commands, general."

"In the first place, the rendez-vous is in the forest of Fougères. Direct the men to separate and meet there."

"The order has been given."

"Did you not say that the people of Herbe-en-Pail were friendly to the Blues?"

"Yes, general."

"Was the farm burned?"

"Yes."

"Did you burn the hamlet?"

"No."

"Burn it."

"The Blues tried to defend themselves. But they numbered one hundred and fifty, while we were seven thousand."

"What Blues are they?"

"Those of Santerre."

"He who ordered the drums to beat while they were beheading the king? Then it is a Parisian battalion?"

"A demi-battalion."

"What was it called?"

"Their banner has on it, 'Battalion of the Bonnet-Rouge.'"

"Wild beasts."

"What is to be done with the wounded?"

"Put an end to them."

"What are we to do with the prisoners?"

"Shoot them."

"There are about eighty of them."

"Shoot them all."

"There are two women."

"Treat them all alike."

"And three children."

"Bring them along. We will decide what Is to be done with them."

And the Marquis spurred his horse forward.

VII.

NO MERCY![2]NO QUARTER![3]

While these events were transpiring in the vicinity of Tanis, the beggar had gone towards Crollon. He plunged into the ravines, under wide leafy bowers, heedless of all things, noticing nothing; as he himself had expressed it, dreaming rather than thinking,—for the thinker has an object, but the dreamer has none; wandering, rambling, pausing, munching here and there a sprig of wild sorrel, drinking at the springs, raising his head from time to time as distant sounds attracted his attention, then yielding again to the irresistible fascination of nature; presenting his rags to the sunlight, hearing human sounds, by chance, but listening to the singing of birds.

He was old and slow; as he told the Marquis of Lantenac, he could not go far; a quarter of a mile fatigued him; he made a short circuit towards Croix-Avranchin, and it was evening when he returned.

A little beyond Macey, the path he followed led him to a sort of elevation, destitute of trees, which commanded a wide expanse of country, including the entire horizon from the west as far as the sea.

A smoke attracted his attention.

There is nothing more delightful than a smoke, and nothing more alarming. There are smokes signifying peace, and smokes that mean mischief. In the density and color of a column of smoke lies all the difference between war and peace, brotherly love and hatred, hospitality and the grave, life and death. A smoke rising among the trees may mean the sweetest thing in all the world,—the family hearth, or the most dreadful of calamities,—a conflagration. And the entire happiness or misery of a human being is sometimes centred in a vapor, scattered by the wind. The smoke which Tellmarch saw was of a kind to excite anxiety.

It was black with sudden flashes of red light, as though the furnace from whence it sprung burned fitfully and was gradually dying out, and it rose above Herbe-en-Pail. Tellmarch hurried along, walking towards the smoke. He was tired, but he wanted to know what it meant.

He reached the top of a hillock, behind which nestled a hamlet and the farm.

Neither farm nor hamlet was to be seen.

A heap of ruins was still burning, all that remained of Herbe-en-Pail.

It is much more heart-rending to see a cottage burn than a palace. A cottage in flames is a pitiful sight. Devastation swooping down on poverty, a vulture pouncing upon an earth-worm,—there is a sense of repugnance about it that makes one shudder.

If we believe the Biblical legend, the sight of a conflagration once turned a human being into a statue. For an instant a similar change came over Tellmarch. The sight before his eyes transfixed him to the spot. The work of destruction went on in silence. Not a cry was heard; not a human sigh mingled with the smoke. That furnace pursued its task of devouring the village with no other sound than the splitting of timbers and the crackling of thatch. From time to time the clouds of smoke were rent, the falling roofs revealed the gaping chambers, the fiery furnace displayed all its rubies, the poor rags turned scarlet, and the wretched old furniture, tinged with purple, stood out amid these dull red interiors; Tellmarch was dazed by the terrible calamity.

Several trees of a neighboring chestnut-grove had caught fire and were in a blaze.

He listened, trying to hear a voice, a call, or some kind of a noise. Nothing stirred but the flames; all was still save the fire. Had all the inhabitants fled?

Where was the community that lived and labored at Herbe-en-Pail? What had become of this little family?

Tellmarch descended the hillock.

A gloomy enigma lay before him. He approached it slowly, gazing at it steadily. He advanced towards the ruin with the deliberation of a shadow, feeling like a ghost in this tomb.

Having reached what had formerly been the door of the farm, he looked into the yard, whose ruined walls no longer separated it from the surrounding hamlet.

What he had seen before was nothing as compared with what he now beheld. From afar he had seen the terror of it; now all its horrors lay before him.

In the middle of the yard was a dark mass, vaguely outlined on one side by the flames, and on the other by the moonlight. It was a heap of men; and these men were dead. Around this mound lay a wide pool, still smoking, whose surface reflected the flames; but it needed not the fire to redden it; it was of blood.

Tellmarch went up to it. He examined, one after another, these prostrate bodies; all were corpses. Both the moon and the conflagration lighted up the scene.

The dead bodies were those of soldiers. Every man had bare feet; both their shoes and their weapons had been taken from them, but they still wore their blue uniforms. Here and there one could distinguish, amid the confusion of the limbs and heads, hats bearing the tricolor cockades riddled with bullets. They were republicans,—the same Parisians who the previous evening had been living, active men, garrisoned at the farm Herbe-en-Pail. The symmetrical arrangement of the fallen bodies proved the affair to have been an execution. They had been shot on the spot, and with precision. They were all dead. Not a sound came from the mass.

Tellmarch examined each individual corpse, and every man was riddled with shot.

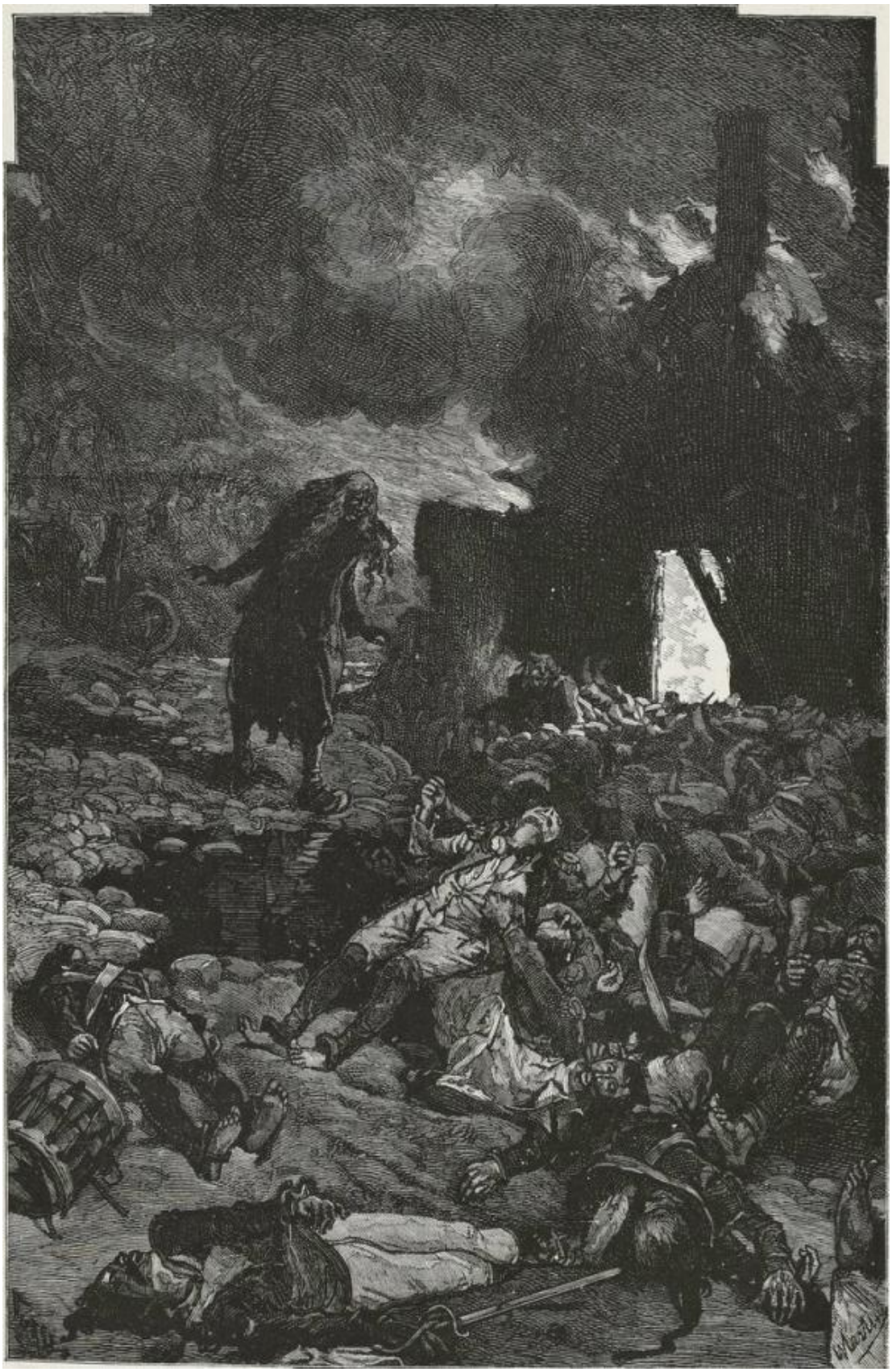
Their executioners, doubtless in haste to depart, had not taken time to bury them.

Just as he was about to leave the place, his attention was attracted by the sight of four feet protruding beyond the corner of a low wall in the yard.

These feet were smaller than those which he had previously seen; there were shoes upon them, and as he drew near he perceived that they were the feet of women.

Two women were lying side by side behind the wall, also shot.

Tellmarch stooped over them. One of them wore a kind of uniform; beside her was a jug, broken and empty. She was a vivandière. She had four balls in her head. She was dead.



Tellmarch examined the other, who was a peasant woman. Her eyes were closed, her mouth open, her face discolored; but there were no wounds in her head. Her dress, undoubtedly worn to shreds by long marches, was rent by her fall, exposing her bosom. Tellmarch pushed it still further aside, and discovered on her shoulder a round wound made by a ball; the shoulder-blade was broken. He gazed upon her livid breast.

"A nursing mother," he murmured.

He touched her. She was not cold.

The broken bone and the wound in the shoulder were her only injuries. He placed his hand on her breast, and felt a faint throb. She was not dead.

Tellmarch raised himself, and cried out in a terrible voice,—

"Is there no one here?"

"Is that you, Caimand?" replied a voice, so low that it could scarcely be heard.

At the same time a head emerged from a hole in the ruin, and the next moment a second one peered forth from another aperture.

These were the sole survivors,—two peasants who had managed to hide themselves, and who now, reassured by the familiar voice of the Caimand, crept out of the hiding-places where they had been crouching.

They approached Tellmarch, still trembling violently.

The latter had found strength to utter his cry, but he could not speak; deep emotions always produce this effect.

He pointed to the woman lying at his feet.

"Is she still alive?" asked one of the peasants.

Tellmarch nodded.

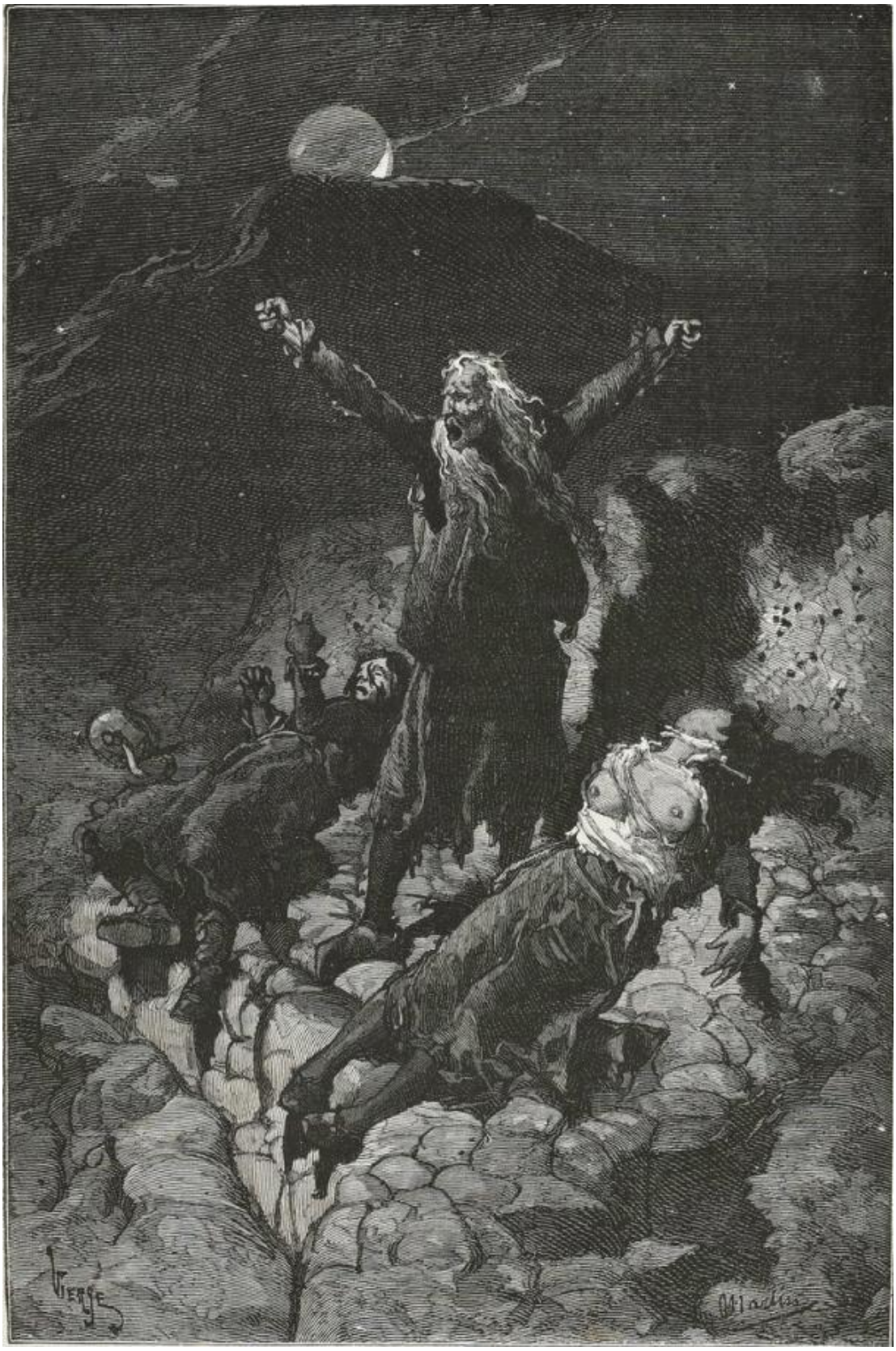
"And the other woman,—is she living too?" asked the second peasant.

Tellmarch shook his head.

The peasant who had been the first to show himself continued:—

"All the others are dead, are they not? I saw it all. I was in my cellar. How grateful one is to God, in times like these, to have no family! My house was burned. Lord Jesus!

everybody was killed. This woman had children,—three little ones! The children cried, 'Mother!' The mother cried, 'Oh, my children!' They killed the mother and carried away the children. I saw all,—oh, my God! my God! Those who murdered them went off well pleased. They carried away the little ones, and killed the mother. But she is not dead, is she? I say, Caimand, do you think you could save her? Don't you want us to help you carry her to your *carnichot?*"



Tellmarch nodded.

The woods were near the farm. They quickly made a litter with branches and ferns, and placing the woman, still motionless, upon it, they started towards the grove, the two peasants bearing the litter, one at the head, the other at the foot, while Tellmarch supported the woman's arm and constantly felt her pulse.

On the way the two peasants talked; and over the body of the bleeding woman, whose pale face was lighted by the moon, they exchanged their frightened exclamations.

"To kill all!"

"To burn all!"

"Oh, my Lord! Is that the way they are going to do now?"

"It was that tall old man who ordered it."

"Yes; he was the commander."

"I did not see him while the shooting went on. Was he there?"

"No, he was gone. But it was done by his order, all the same."

"Then it was he who did this."

"He said, 'Kill, burn! No quarter!'"

"Is he a marquis?"

"Yes, of course; he is our marquis."

"What is his name?"

"It is Monsieur de Lantenac."

Tellmarch raised his eyes to heaven, murmuring between his teeth,—

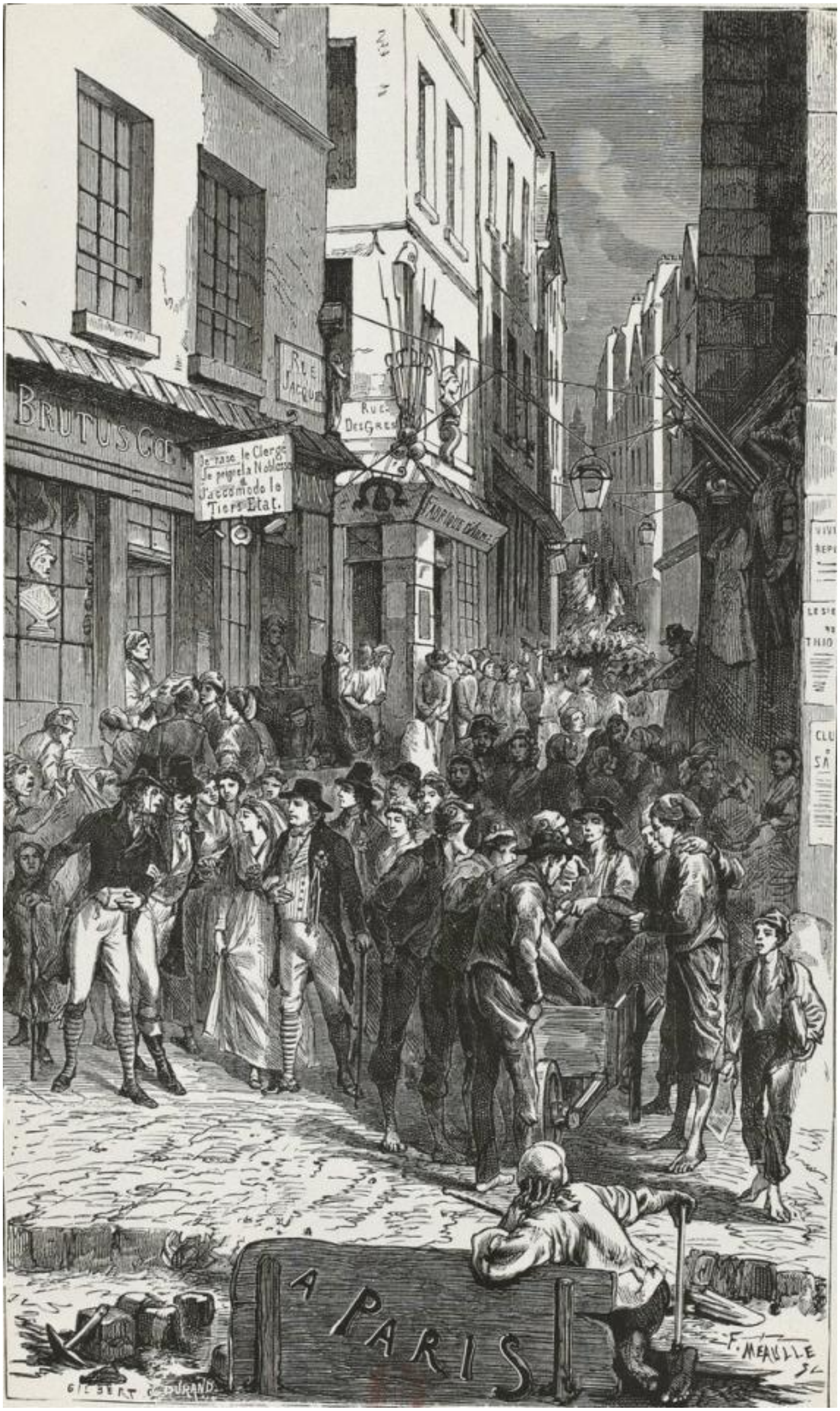
"Had I but known!"

---

[1]A head.—TR.

[2]Watchword of the Commune.

[3]Watchword of the Princes.


BRUTUS COE
Je rase le Clergé
Je peigne la Noblesse
&
J'accomode le
Tiers Etat.
RUE JACQUES
RUE DES GRES
A PARIS
F. MEAULLE
GILBERT & DURAND

PART II.

AT PARIS.


J. J. ROUSSEAU
ENCYCLOPEDIE
CIMOURDAIN.
MAILLART
F. MÉAULLE

BOOK I.

CIMOURDAIN.

I.

THE STREETS OF PARIS AT THAT TIME.

People lived in public; they ate at tables spread outside the doors; women sat on the church steps, making lint to the accompaniment of the Marseillaise; the park of Monceaux and the Luxembourg were turned into parade-grounds; at every street-corner there was a gun-maker's shop, where muskets were manufactured before the eyes of the passers-by, to their great admiration. "Patience: this is revolution" was on every lip. People smiled heroically. They went to the theatre as in Athens during the Peloponnesian war. At street-corners were seen such playbills as these, advertising: "The Siege of Thionville;" "A Mother saved from the Flames;" "The Club of Sans-Soucis;" "The oldest of the Popes Joan;" "The Military Philosophers;" "The Art of Love-making in the Village." The Germans were at the gates; it was rumored that the King of Prussia had secured boxes for the opera. Everything was terrible, yet no one was frightened. The grewsome law against the suspected, which was the crime of Merlin

de Douai, held a vision of the guillotine suspended over every head. A lawyer, Séran by name, learning that he had been denounced, calmly awaited his arrest, arrayed in his dressing-gown and slippers, playing the flute at his window. No one seemed to have any spare time, every one was in a hurry; all the hats bore their cockades, and the women cried, "Are not red caps becoming to us?" All Paris seemed in the act of changing its abode. The curiosity shops were filled with crowns, mitres, gilded sceptres, and fleur-de-lis, spoils from royal dwellings,—the signs of the destruction of monarchy. Copes and surplices might be seen hanging on hooks offered for sale at the old-clothes shops. At the Porcherons and at Ramponneau's men decked out in surplices and stoles bestrode donkeys caparisoned with chasubles, and drank wine from ecclesiastical ciboria. In the Rue Saint-Jacques barefooted street-pavers once stopped the wheelbarrow of a shoe-pedler and clubbing together bought fifteen pairs of shoes to send to the Convention "for our soldiers." Busts of Rousseau, Franklin, Brutus, and even, be it added, of Marat, abounded. In the Rue Cloche-Perce, below one of Marat's busts, in a black wooden frame under glass, hung a formula of prosecution against Malouet, with facts in support of the charges and the following lines inscribed on the margin:—

These details were given to me by the mistress of Sylvain Bailly, a good patriot, and who had a liking for me.

Signed:

MARAT.

The inscription on the Palais Royal fountain, "Quantos effundit in usus!" was hidden under two large canvases painted in distemper, one representing Cahier de Gerville denouncing to the National Assembly the rallying-cry of the "Chiffonistes" of Arles; the other, Louis XVI. brought back from Varennes in his royal carriage, and under the carriage a plank fastened by cords bearing on each end a grenadier with levelled bayonet. Very few large shops were open; perambulating carts containing haberdashery and toys, lighted by tallow candles, which, melting, dripped upon the merchandise, were dragged through the streets by women. Ex-nuns adorned with blond wigs kept open shop; this woman, darning stockings in a stall, was a countess; that dressmaker, a marchioness; Madame de Boufflers lived in an attic from which she had a view of her own hotel. Venders ran about offering the news bulletins. People who muffled their chins in their neck-cloths were called "écrouelleux." Street singers swarmed. The crowd hooted Pitou, the royalist song-writer, a brave man, to boot, for he was imprisoned twenty-two times and was brought before the revolutionary tribunal for slapping himself behind when he uttered the word "civism;" seeing that his

head was in danger, he exclaimed, "But my head is not the offending member!" which made the judges laugh, and saved his life. This Pitou ridiculed the fashion of Greek and Latin names; his favorite song was about a cobbler and his wife whom he called Cujus and Cujusdam. The Carmagnole was danced in circles; they no longer said "lady" and "gentleman," but "citizen" and "citizeness." They danced in the ruined cloisters, beneath a chandelier made of two sticks fastened crosswise to the vaulted roof, bearing four candles, while the church lamps burned upon the altar, and tombs lay beneath the dancers' feet. They wore "tyrant-blue" waistcoats, and shirt-pins called "liberty's cap," composed of red, white, and blue stones. The Rue de Richelieu was called Rue de la Loi; the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, the Faubourg de Gloire; a statue of Nature stood in the Place de la Bastille. People pointed out to each other well-known personages,—Châtelet, Didier, Nicolas, and Gamier-Delaunay, who mounted guard at the doors of the joiner Duplay; Voullant, who never missed a day of guillotining, and who followed the tumbrils of the condemned, calling it "going to the red mass;" Montflabert, a revolutionary juryman and marquis whom they called *Dix-Août*. They watched the pupils of the École Militaire file past, called "aspirants to the school of Mars" by the decrees of the Convention, and nicknamed by the people "Robespierre's pages." They read the proclamations of Fréron, denouncing those suspected of the crime of "négotiantisime." Young scapegraces gathered about the doors of the mayoralties crowding the brides and grooms as they came in sight, and shouting, "Municipal marriages," in derision of the civil ceremony. The statues of the saints and kings at the Invalides were crowned with Phrygian caps. They played cards on curbstones at the crossings, and the very cards themselves were totally revolutionized; kings were replaced by genii, queens by the Goddess of Liberty, knaves by Equality, aces by emblems of Law. The public gardens were tilled; they ploughed the Tuileries.

With all this was intermingled, especially among the conquered party, an indescribably haughty weariness of living. A man wrote to Fouquier-Tinville, "Be so kind as to lift from me the burden of life. This is my address." Champcenetz was arrested for exclaiming at the Palais Royal: "When are we to have a Turkish revolution? I should like to see the republic *à la Porte*."[1] Newspapers abounded. Hair-dressers' apprentices curled the women's wigs in public while the master read the "Moniteur" aloud; others, surrounded by listeners, commented with expressive gesticulations on the journal "Entendons nous," of Dubois Crancé, or the "Trompette du père Bellerose." Sometimes a man was both a barber and a pork-dealer; and hams and chitterlings would hang side by side with a golden-haired doll. The wines of the Émigrés were sold by dealers on the streets. One merchant advertised wine of fifty-two different brands;

others retailed lyre-shaped clocks and sofas *à la duchesse*. A hairdresser had the following notice printed on his sign: "I shave the clergy; I dress the hair of the nobility; I wait upon the Tiers-État." People went to Martin, at No. 173 in the Rue d'Anjou, formerly called Rue Dauphine, to have their fortune told. Bread, coal, and soap were scarce. Herds of milch-cows on their way from the provinces were constantly passing. At La Vallée, lamb was sold at fifteen francs a pound. An order of the Commune assigned to each person a pound of meat for every ten days. People stood in files at the shop-doors; one file that reached from the door of a grocer's shop in the Rue du Petit-Carreau to the middle of the Rue Montorgueil has become a matter of tradition. Forming a queue was called "holding the string," on account of the long cord held by those who stood in line one behind the other.

In the midst of all this wretchedness women were brave and gentle. They passed whole nights waiting their turn to be served at the baker's. The revolution was successful in its expedients. It alleviated this wide-spread misery by two dangerous measures,—the assignat and the maximum; in other words, the lever and the fulcrum. France was actually saved by empiricism. The enemy, both in Coblentz and in London, speculated in assignats.

Girls went hither and thither offering lavender-water, garters, and false hair, and selling stocks at the same time; there were stock-jobbers on the steps of the Rue Vivienne, with muddy shoes, greasy hair, woollen caps with fox-tails, and the dandies of the Rue de Valois, with their polished boots, a toothpick in their mouths, and beaver

hats on their heads, to whom the girls said "thee and thou." The people hunted them down as they did thieves, whom the royalists called "active citizens." Robbery, however, seldom occurred; the fearful destitution was matched by a stoical honesty. With downcast eyes the barefooted and the hungry went gravely past the shop-windows of the jewellers of the Palais Égalité. During a domiciliary visit made by the Section Antoine at Beaumarchais' house, a woman plucked a flower in the garden: the crowd boxed her ears. A cord of wood cost four hundred francs in coin. People were to be seen in the streets sawing up their wooden beds. In the winter the fountains froze, and two pails of water cost twenty sous; every man was his own water-carrier. A gold louis was worth three thousand nine hundred and fifty francs. A ride in a fiacre cost six hundred francs. After a day's ride the following dialogue might be heard: "How much do I owe you, coachman?" "Six thousand livres." The trade of a greengrocer woman amounted to twenty thousand francs a day. A beggar was known to have said: "Help me, for charity's sake! I want two hundred and thirty livres to pay for my shoes." At the entrance of the bridges might be seen colossal figures, sculptured and painted by David, which Mercier insultingly called "enormous wooden Punchinellos." These figures represented Federalism and Coalition overthrown. No infirmity of purpose among the people. There was a gloomy sense of pleasure in having put an end to thrones. No lack of volunteers ready to lay down their lives: every street furnished a battalion. The flags of the district went hither and thither, each one with its own device. On the banner of the Capuchin District might be read, "No one will shave us;" on another, "No other nobility save that of the heart." On the walls were placards, large and small, white, yellow, green, and red, printed and written, on all which might be read this war-cry: "Long live the Republic!" Little children lisped, "Ça ira."

These little children were the nucleus of a great future.

Later on, a cynical city took the place of the tragical one; the streets of Paris have displayed two distinct revolutionary aspects,—the one preceding the 9th Thermidor, and that which followed it. After the Paris of Saint-Just came the Paris of Tallien. Such are the constant antitheses of Almighty God. Immediately after Sinai, the Courtille appeared.

Paroxysms of popular folly may always be expected. The same thing had taken place eighty years before. After Louis XIV., as well as after Robespierre, the people needed breathing space; hence the Regency at the opening of the century and the Directory at its close, each reign of terror ending in a Saturnalia. France fled from the Puritan as well as from the monarchical cloister with the joy of a nation escaping from bondage.

After the 9th Thermidor, Paris was like one gone mad with gayety. An unwholesome joy prevailed, exceeding all bounds. The frenzy of life followed the frenzy of death, and grandeur eclipsed itself. They had a Trimalcion whom they called Grimod de la Reynière; also an "Almanach des Gourmands." People dined to the accompaniment of trumpets in the entresols of the Palais Royal; the orchestras were composed of women beating drums and blowing trumpets; the "rigadooner," bow in hand, reigned over all; they supped after the Oriental fashion at Méot's, surrounded by censers of perfume. The artist Boze painted his daughters, innocent and charming heads of sixteen, "en guillotinés,"—that is, bare-necked and in red chemises. The wild dances in ruined churches were followed by the balls of Ruggieri, Luquet Wenzel, Mauduit, and the Montansier; to the dignified *citoyennes* making lint, succeeded sultanas, savages, and nymphs; to the bare feet of the soldiers, disfigured by blood, mud, and dust, succeeded the bare feet of women adorned with diamonds; and together with shamelessness came dishonesty,—which had its purveyors in high places, and their imitators in the lower ranks. Paris was infested by swarms of sharpers, and every man had to watch his "luc," or in other words, his pocket-book. One of the amusements was to go to the Place of the Palais de Justice to see the female acrobats on the tabouret; they were forced to tie their skirts down. At the doors of the theatres street-urchins offered cabs, crying, "Citizen and Citizeness, there is room enough for two." They sold no more copies of "The Old Cordelier" or of "L'Ami du peuple;" but in their stead they offered "Punch's Letter" and "The Rogues' Petition." The Marquis de Sade presided at the section of the Pikes, Place Vendôme. The reaction was both jovial and ferocious. The Dragons of Liberty of '92 were revived under the name of Knights of the Dagger. At the same time there appeared on the stage the type Jocrisse. There were the "Merveilleuses," and after the "Merveilleuses," the "Inconcevables." People swore fantastic oaths by "sa paole victimée" and by "sa paole verte." This was the recoil from Mirabeau to Bobèche. Paris vibrates like an enormous pendulum of civilization; now it touches one pole, now the other,—Thermopylæ and Gomorrah. After '93, Revolution suffered a singular eclipse: the century apparently forgot to finish what it had begun; a strange orgie, interposing, took possession of the foreground, and thrusting the dread Apocalypse behind, it drew a veil over the monstrous vision, and shouted with laughter after its fright; tragedy vanished in parody; and rising from the horizon's edge the smoke of carnival obscured the outlines of Medusa.

But in the year '93 the streets of Paris still retained the imposing and fierce aspect of the beginning. They had their orators, like Varlot for instance, who travelled about in a booth on wheels, from the top of which he harangued the passers-by; their heroes, one of whom was called "the Captain of iron-shod poles;" their favorites, like Guffroy,

the author of the pamphlet "Rougiff." Some of these celebrities were mischievous, others exerted a wholesome influence. One among all the rest was honest and filial,—it was Cimourdain.

II.

CIMOURDAIN.

Cimourdain had a pure but gloomy soul. There was something of the absolute within him. He had been a priest, which is a serious matter. A man may, like the heavens, enjoy a gloomy serenity,—it needs only an influence powerful enough to create night within his soul; and the priesthood had done this thing for Cimourdain. To be once a priest is to be a priest forever.

Though there be night within us, we may still possess the stars. Cimourdain was a man of many virtues and truths, but they shone amid the darkness.

His story may be told in a few words. He had been a village curate, and tutor in an influential family; but falling heir to a small legacy, he had thereby gained his freedom.

He was obstinate to the last degree. He employed meditation as the artisan uses his pincers. He believed it wrong to abandon an idea until he had fully developed it. His method of thought was intense. He was familiar with all the European languages, and had some acquaintance with other tongues. His devotion to study was a great help towards the preservation of his chastity. But there is nothing more dangerous than such a system of repression.

Either from pride, circumstances, or loftiness of soul, he had been true to his priestly vows; but his faith he had not been able to keep. Science had crushed it; all his dogmas had gone from him. Then, looking into his own soul, he saw therein a mutilated being, and having no power to rid himself of his priesthood, he tried, after an austere fashion, to remould the man. For want of a family he adopted his country; a wife had been refused him,—he had wedded humanity. There is a certain sense of emptiness in this all-embracing zeal.

His parents, who were peasants, had thought to lift him above the common people by consecrating him to the priesthood; he had returned among them of his own accord, and with a feeling of passionate devotion watched the suffering with intense sympathy. From a priest he had become a philosopher, and from a philosopher an athlete. Even during the life of Louis XV., Cimourdain had vaguely fancied himself a republican. But of what republic? Perhaps of the Republic of Plato, and it might be of Draco also. Forbidden to love, he devoted himself to hating. He detested lies, monarchy, theocracy, and his priestly garb; he hated the present, and eagerly invoked the future; he had a presentiment of what it would be, he foresaw it, he pictured it, both terrible and grand. In order to put an end to this deplorable human misery, he felt the need of a leader who would appear not only as an avenger but also as a liberator. He worshipped the catastrophe from afar.

In 1789 this catastrophe came and found him ready. Cimourdain flung himself into that gigantic scheme for human regeneration on logical principles, which, for a mind constituted like his, is equivalent to saying with inexorable determination. Logic is not a softening influence. He had survived the great revolutionary years, and had been shaken by the blasts thereof,—in '89, the fall of the Bastille, the end of the martyrdom of people; in.'90, on the 19th of June, the end of the feudal system; in '91, Varennes, and the end of royalty; in '92, the birth of the Republic. He had seen the rise of

Revolution. He was not the man to fear that giant; on the contrary, the universal growth had given him new life, and though already advanced in years,—for he was fifty, and a priest ages faster than other men,—he too began to develop. From year to year he had watched and kept pace with the progress of events. At first he had feared lest Revolution might fail; he watched it. Since it had both logic and justice on its side, he expected its success, and his confidence increased in proportion to the fear it inspired; he would have this Minerva crowned with the stars of the future,—a Pallas likewise bearing the Gorgon's head for her buckler. In case of need he would have wished an infernal glare to flash from her divine eyes upon the demons, paying them back in their own coin.

Thus he reached '93.

'93 is the war of Europe against France, and of France against Paris. What then is Revolution? It is the victory of France over Europe, and of Paris over France. Hence the immensity of that terrible moment '93, grander than all the rest of the century.

Nothing could be more tragic. Europe attacking France, and France attacking Paris,—a drama with the proportions of an epic.

'93 is a year of intense action. The tempest is there in all its wrath and grandeur. Cimourdain felt himself in his element. This scene of distraction, wild and magnificent, suited the compass of his outspread wings. Like a sea-eagle, he united a profound inward calm with a relish for external danger. Certain winged natures, souls of the tempest, ferocious yet tranquil, seem eminently fitted for combatting the storms of life.

His sense of pity was never kindled, save in behalf of the wretched. He devoted himself to those forms of suffering that are most repulsive. For him nothing was abhorrent. That was his kind of goodness. He was divine in his zeal to relieve the most loathsome sufferers. He searched for ulcers that he might kiss them. Those noble actions which are hideous to look upon are the most difficult to perform; for such he had a preference. One day at the Hôtel-Dieu a man was at the point of death, suffocating with a tumor in the throat,—a putrid, malignant, and perhaps contagious abscess, which must be opened at once. Cimourdain was there; he put his lips to the abscess, sucked it, spitting it out as his mouth filled, emptied the tumor and saved the man. As he still was wearing his priestly garb at the time, some one said to him: "Had you done that for the king you would be made a bishop." "I would not do it for the king," replied Cimourdain. The act and the answer made him popular in the gloomy quarters of Paris to a degree that won for him unbounded influence over the classes that suffer, weep, and struggle for vengeance. When the public indignation, that fruitful source of

blunders, rose high against the monopolists, it was Cimourdain who by a word prevented the sacking of a boat laden with soap at the Saint-Nicolas quay, and who dispersed the furious crowds that were stopping the carriages at the barrier Saint-Lazare.

He it was who ten days after the 10th of August marshalled the people who went forth to overthrow the statues of kings, which as they fell cost some of them their lives. On the Place Vendôme, a woman, Reine Violet, pulling at the rope she had fastened around the neck of Louis XIV., was crushed to death beneath its weight. This statue had been standing for a hundred years: it was erected on the 12th of August, 1692; it was overthrown on the 12th of August, 1793. On the Place de la Concorde one Guinguerlot, having called the demolishers "canaille," was butchered on the pedestal of the statue of Louis XV. The statue itself was hacked to pieces; later, it was melted into sous. One arm alone escaped,—the right arm, which Louis XV. held outstretched with the gesture of a Roman emperor. By request of Cimourdain the people sent a deputation to offer this arm to Latude, a man who had been buried alive in the Bastille for forty years. When Latude with an iron collar round his neck and a chain round his loins was rotting alive in that prison at the bidding of the king whose statue overlooked Paris, who could have prophesied to him that both prison and statue would fall, and that he would come forth from his tomb,—he, the prisoner, would be the master of that hand of bronze which had signed his warrant, and that nothing would be left of this monarch of clay save his brazen arm?

Cimourdain was one of those men who possess an inward monitor, and who when they appear absent-minded are simply listening to its voice.

Cimourdain was both learned and ignorant. He was versed in science, and knew nothing whatever of life; hence his severity. His eyes were bandaged like those of Homer's Themis: he possessed the blind certainty of an arrow,—that, seeing naught besides, flies straight to the goal. In revolution there is nothing so formidable as the straight line. Cimourdain went straight ahead, with fatal results. He believed that in these social geneses the farthest point is solid ground,—an error common to minds in which logic occupies the place of reason. He went beyond the Convention, beyond the Commune: he belonged to the Évêché.

The society called the Évêché because it held its meetings in a hall of the old episcopal palace was rather a medley of men than a society. There were present, as in the Commune, those silent but important spectators who, as Garat expressed it, "had about them as many pistols as they had pockets." The Évêché was a queer mixture, both cosmopolitan and Parisian,—no contradiction in terms, since Paris is the place where throbs the heart of all nations. There at the Évêché was the great plebeian incandescence. As compared with the Évêché, the Convention was cold and the Commune lukewarm. It was one of those revolutionary formations which partake of the nature of a volcano. The Évêché combined everything,—ignorance, stupidity, honesty, heroism, wrath, and policy. Brunswick had agents therein. It held men worthy of Sparta, and others fit only for the galleys. The greater number of them were mad and honest. The Gironde, speaking in the person of Isnard, temporary president of the Convention, had uttered this appalling prophecy: "Parisians, beware! for in your city not one stone shall be left resting upon another, and the day will come when men will search for the place where Paris once stood." This speech had given Birth to the Évêché. Certain men—and as we have just said, men of all nations—had felt the need of drawing closer to Paris. Cimourdain joined this group.

The party reacted against the reactionists. It sprang from that public necessity for violence which constitutes the formidable and mysterious side of revolutions. Strong in this strength, the Évêché at once defined its position. In the disturbances of Paris it was the Commune that fired the cannon, and the Évêché that sounded the alarm.

In his inexorable sincerity Cimourdain believed that all means are fair when devoted to the service of truth,—a conviction which eminently fitted him for the control of extremists of all parties. Scoundrels perceived him to be honest, and were satisfied. Crime is flattered to feel that virtue has taken it in charge. It is rather embarrassing, but pleasing nevertheless. Palloy the architect, who had taken advantage of the

destruction of the Bastille to sell the stones for his own benefit, and who, being appointed to paint the cell of Louis XVI., had in his zeal covered the wall with bars, chains, and iron collars; Gonchon, the suspected orator of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, whose receipts were found later; the American Fournier, who on the 17th of July fired a pistol-shot at Lafayette,—an act for which, they said, Lafayette himself had paid; Henriot, who had come from Bicêtre, and who had been a lackey, a juggler, a thief, and a spy before he turned general and levelled his guns on the Convention; La Reynie, formerly grand-vicar of Chartres, who had substituted "Père Duchesne" for his breviary,—all these men were respected by Cimourdain, and all that was needed to keep the worst of them from stumbling occasionally was to feel that really formidable and determined candor like a judgment before them. It was thus that Saint-Just terrified Schneider. At the same time the majority in the Évêché, consisting for the most part of poor and violent men, sincere in their purposes, believed in Cimourdain and followed him. His vicar or aide-de-camp, whichever you choose to call him, was Danjou,—that other republican priest, whose lofty stature endeared him to the people, who called him the Abbé Six-Pieds. Cimourdain could have led whithersoever he chose that fearless chief called Général la Pique and the bold Truchon (surnamed Grand-Nicolas), who tried to save Madame de Lamballe, offering her his arm to assist her in leaping over the corpses,—an attempt which would have proved successful had it not been for the barbarous joke of Chariot the barber.

The Commune kept watch over the Convention, and the Évêché over the Commune. Cimourdain, an upright man, despising intrigues, had broken more than one mysterious thread in the hands of Pache, whom Beurnonville called "the black man." At the Évêché, Cimourdain was on good terms with all. He was consulted by Dobsent and Momoro. He spoke Spanish to Gusman, Italian to Pio, English to Arthur, Flemish to Pereyra, German to the Austrian Proly, the bastard of a prince. He reconciled all these discordant elements: hence his strong though obscure position. Hébert feared him.

In those times and over those tragic assemblies Cimourdain possessed the power of the inexorable. He was a faultless man, who believed himself to be infallible. He had never been seen to weep. His was an inaccessible and frigid virtue; a just, but awful, man.

There are no half measures possible for a revolutionary priest. A priest who embarks in an adventure so portentous in its aims, is influenced either by the highest or the lowest motives; he must be either infamous or sublime. Cimourdain was sublime, but isolated in rugged inaccessibility, inhospitably repellent,—sublime in his surrounding of precipices. Lofty mountains possess this forbidding purity.

Cimourdain looked like an ordinary man, clothed in whatever happened to be convenient, rather poor in aspect. In his youth he had received the tonsure, and later in life had become bald. His few remaining locks were gray. Looking upon his forehead, expansive as it was, an observing eye could read his character. Cimourdain had an abrupt way of speaking, at once passionate and solemn; his utterance was rapid, his tone peremptory, the expression of his mouth sad and bitter; his eyes were clear and deep, and his whole face bore the impress of an unspeakable indignation. Such was Cimourdain.

To-day his name is unknown.

History possesses these terrible incognitos.
