XIII

## THOUGHTLESSNESS ADDS A GRACE TO BEAUTY

A word once said, Mess Lethierry remembered it: a word once said, Déruchette soon forgot it. Here was another difference between the uncle and the niece.

Brought up in the peculiar way already described, Déruchette was little accustomed to responsibility. There is a latent danger in an education not sufficiently serious, which cannot be too much insisted on. It is perhaps unwise to endeavour to make a child happy too soon.

So long as she was happy, Déruchette thought all was well. She knew, too, that it was always a pleasure to her uncle to see her pleased. The religious sentiment in her nature was satisfied with going to the parish church four times in the year. We have seen her in her Christmas-day toilet. Of life, she was entirely ignorant. She had a disposition which one day might lead her to love passionately. Meanwhile she was contented.

She sang by fits and starts, chatted by fits and starts, enjoyed the hour as it passed, fulfilled some little duty, and was gone again, and was delightful in all. Add to all this the English sort of liberty which she enjoyed. In England the very infants[Pg 66] go alone, girls are their own mistresses, and adolescence is almost wholly unrestrained. Such are the differences of manners. Later, how many of these free maidens become female slaves? I use the word in its least odious sense; I mean that they are free in the development of their nature, but slaves to duty.

Déruchette awoke every morning with little thought of her actions of the day before. It would have troubled her a good deal to have had to give an account of how she had spent her time the previous week. All this, however, did not prevent her having certain hours of strange disquietude; times when some dark cloud seemed to pass over the brightness of her joy. Those azure depths are subject to such shadows! But clouds like these soon passed away. She quickly shook off such moods with a cheerful laugh, knowing neither why she had been sad, nor why she had regained her serenity. She was always at play. As a child, she would take delight in teasing the passers-by. She played practical jokes upon the boys. If the fiend himself had passed that way, she would hardly have spared him some ingenious trick. She was pretty and innocent; and she could abuse the immunity accorded to such qualities. She was ready with a smile, as a cat with a stroke of her claws. So much the worse for the victim of her scratches. She thought no more of them. Yesterday had no existence for her. She lived in the

fullness of to-day. Such it is to have too much happiness fall to one's lot! With Déruchette impressions vanished like the melted snow.[Pg 67]

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BOOK IV

THE BAGPIPE

I

STREAKS OF FIRE ON THE HORIZON

Gilliatt had never spoken to Déruchette; he knew her from having seen her at a distance, as men know the morning star.

At the period when Déruchette had met Gilliatt on the road leading from St. Peter's Port to Vale, and had surprised him by tracing his name in the snow, she was just sixteen years of age. Only the evening before Mess Lethierry had said to her, "Come, no more childish tricks; you are a great girl."

That word "Gilliatt," written by the young maiden, had sunk into an unfathomed depth.

What were women to Gilliatt? He could not have answered that question himself. When he met one he generally inspired her with something of the timidity which he felt himself. He never spoke to a woman except from urgent necessity. He had never played the part of a "gallant" to any one of the country girls. When he found himself alone on the road, and perceived a woman coming towards him, he would climb over a fence, or bury himself in some copse: he even avoided old women. Once in his life he had seen a Parisian lady. A *Parisienne* on the wing was a strange event in Guernsey at that distant epoch; and Gilliatt had heard this gentle lady relate her little troubles in these words: "I am very much annoyed; I have got some spots of rain upon my bonnet. Pale buff is a shocking colour for rain." Having found, some time afterwards, between the leaves of a book, an old engraving, representing "a lady of the Chaussée d'Antin" in full dress, he had stuck it against the wall at home as a souvenir of this remarkable apparition.

On that Christmas morning when he had met Déruchette, and when she had written his name and disappeared laughing, he returned home, scarcely conscious of why he had gone out. That night he slept little; he was dreaming of a thousand things: that it would be well to cultivate black radishes in the[Pg 68] garden; that he had not seen the boat from Sark pass by; had anything happened to it? Then he remembered that he had seen the white stonecrop in flower, a rare thing at that season. He had never

known exactly who was the woman who had reared him, and he made up his mind that she must have been his mother, and thought of her with redoubled tenderness. He called to mind the lady's clothing in the old leathern trunk. He thought that the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode would probably one day or other be appointed dean of St. Peter's Port and surrogate of the bishop, and that the rectory of St. Sampson would become vacant. Next, he remembered that the morrow of Christmas would be the twenty-seventh day of the moon, and that consequently high water would be at twenty-one minutes past three, the half-ebb at a quarter past seven, low water at thirty-three minutes past nine, and half flood at thirty-nine minutes past twelve. He recalled, in the most trifling details, the costume of the Highlander who had sold him the bagpipe; his bonnet with a thistle ornament, his claymore, his close-fitting short jacket, his philabeg ornamented with a pocket, and his snuff-horn, his pin set with a Scottish stone, his two girdles, his sash and belts, his sword, cutlass, dirk, and skene-dhu—his black-sheathed knife, with its black handle ornamented with two cairngorms—and the bare knees of the soldier; his socks, gaiters, and buckled shoes. This highly-equipped figure became a spectre in his imagination, which pursued him with a sense of feverishness as he sunk into oblivion. When he awoke it was full daylight, and his first thought was of Déruchette.

The next night he slept more soundly, but he was dreaming again of the Scottish soldier. In the midst of his sleep he remembered that the after-Christmas sittings of the Chief Law Court would commence on the 21st of January. He dreamed also about the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode. He thought of Déruchette, and seemed to be in violent anger with her. He wished he had been a child again to throw stones at her windows. Then he thought that if he were a child again he should have his mother by his side, and he began to sob.

Gilliatt had a project at this time of going to pass three months at Chousey, or at the Miriquiers; but he did not go.

He walked no more along the road to St. Peter's Port.

He had an odd fancy that his name of "Gilliatt" had remained there traced upon the ground, and that the passers-by stopped to read it.[Pg 69]

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## II

## THE UNKNOWN UNFOLDS ITSELF BY DEGREES

On the other hand, Gilliatt had the satisfaction of seeing the Bravées every day. By some accident he was continually passing that way. His business seemed always to lead him by the path which passed under the wall of Déruchette's garden.

One morning, as he was walking along this path, he heard a market-woman who was returning from the Bravées, say to another: "Mess Lethierry is fond of sea-kale."

He dug in his garden of the Bû de la Rue a trench for sea-kale. The sea-kale is a vegetable which has a flavour like asparagus.

The wall of the garden of the Bravées was very low; it would have been easy to scale it. The idea of scaling it would have appeared, to him, terrible. But there was nothing to hinder his hearing, as any one else might, the voices of persons talking as he passed, in the rooms or in the garden. He did not listen, but he heard them. Once he could distinguish the voices of the two servants, Grace and Douce, disputing. It was a sound which belonged to the house, and their quarrel remained in his ears like a remembrance of music.

On another occasion, he distinguished a voice which was different, and which seemed to him to be the voice of Déruchette. He quickened his pace, and was soon out of hearing.

The words uttered by that voice, however, remained fixed in his memory. He repeated them at every instant. They were, "Will you please give me the little broom?"

By degrees he became bolder. He had the daring to stay awhile. One day it happened that Déruchette was singing at her piano, altogether invisible from without, although her window was open. The air was that of "Bonnie Dundee." He grew pale, but he screwed his courage to the point of listening.

Springtide came. One day Gilliatt enjoyed a beatific vision. The heavens were opened, and there, before his eyes, appeared Déruchette, watering lettuces in her little garden.

Soon afterwards he look to doing more than merely listening there. He watched her habits, observed her hours, and waited to catch a glimpse of her.

In all this he was very careful not to be seen.

The year advanced; the time came when the trellises were[Pg 70] heavy with roses, and haunted by the butterflies. By little and little, he had come to conceal himself for hours behind her wall, motionless and silent, seen by no one, and holding his breath as Déruchette passed in and out of her garden. Men grow accustomed to poison by degrees.

From his hiding-place he could often hear the sound of Déruchette conversing with Mess Lethierry under a thick arch of leaves, in a spot where there was a garden-seat. The words came distinctly to his ears.

What a change had come over him! He had even descended to watch and listen. Alas! there is something of the character of a spy in every human heart.

There was another garden-seat, visible to him, and nearer. Déruchette would sit there sometimes.

From the flowers that he had observed her gathering he had guessed her taste in the matter of perfumes. The scent of the bindweed was her favourite, then the pink, then the honeysuckle, then the jasmine. The rose stood only fifth in the scale. She looked at the lilies, but did not smell them.

Gilliatt figured her in his imagination from this choice of odours. With each perfume he associated some perfection.

The very idea of speaking to Déruchette would have made his hair stand on end. A poor old rag-picker, whose wandering brought her, from time to time, into the little road leading under the inclosure of the Bravées, had occasionally remarked Gilliatt's assiduity beside the wall, and his devotion for this retired spot. Did she connect the presence of a man before this wall with the possibility of a woman behind it? Did she perceive that vague, invisible thread? Was she, in her decrepit mendicancy, still youthful enough to remember something of the old happier days? And could she, in this dark night and winter of her wretched life, still recognise the dawn? We know not: but it appears that, on one occasion, passing near Gilliatt at his post, she brought to bear upon him something as like a smile as she was still capable of, and muttered between her teeth, "It is getting warmer."

Gilliatt heard the words, and was struck by them. "It warms one," he muttered, with an inward note of interrogation. "It is getting warmer." What did the old woman mean?

He repeated the phrase mechanically all day, but he could not guess its meaning.[Pg 71]

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III

THE AIR "BONNIE DUNDEE" FINDS AN ECHO ON THE HILL

It was in a spot behind the enclosure of the garden of the Bravées, at an angle of the wall, half concealed with holly and ivy, and covered with nettles, wild mallow, and

large white mullen growing between the blocks of stone, that he passed the greater part of that summer. He watched there, lost in deep thought. The lizards grew accustomed to his presence, and basked in the sun among the same stones. The summer was bright and full of dreamy indolence: overhead the light clouds came and went. Gilliatt sat upon the grass. The air was full of the songs of birds. He held his two hands up to his forehead, sometimes trying to recollect himself: “Why should she write my name in the snow?” From a distance the sea breeze came up in gentle breaths, at intervals the horn of the quarrymen sounded abruptly, warning the passers-by to take shelter, as they shattered some mass with gunpowder. The Port of St. Sampson was not visible from this place, but he could see the tips of masts above the trees. The sea-gulls flew wide and afar. Gilliatt had heard his mother say that women could love men; that such things happened sometimes. He remembered it; and said within himself, “Who knows, may not Déruchette love me?” Then a feeling of sadness would come upon him; he would say, “She, too, thinks of me in her turn. It is well.” He remembered that Déruchette was rich, and that he was poor: and then the new boat appeared to him an execrable invention. He could never remember what day of the month it was. He would stare listlessly at the great bees, with their yellow bodies and their short wings, as they entered with a buzzing noise into the holes in the wall.

One evening Déruchette went in-doors to retire to bed. She approached her window to close it. The night was dark. Suddenly, something caught her ear, and she listened. Somewhere in the darkness there was a sound of music. It was some one, perhaps, on the hill-side, or at the foot of the towers of Vale Castle, or, perhaps, further still, playing an air upon some instrument. Déruchette recognised her favourite melody, “Bonnie Dundee,” played upon the bagpipe. She thought little of it.

From that night the music might be heard again from time[Pg 72] to time at the same hours, particularly when the nights were very dark.

Déruchette was not much pleased with all this.

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IV

“A serenade by night may please a lady fair,
the troubadour beware.”
*Unpublished Comedy*

Four years passed away.

Déruchette was approaching her twenty-first year, and was still unmarried. Some writer has said that a fixed idea is a sort of gimlet; every year gives it another turn. To pull out the first year is like plucking out the hair by the roots; in the second year, like tearing the skin; in the third, like breaking the bones; and in the fourth, like removing the very brain itself.

Gilliatt had arrived at this fourth stage.

He had never yet spoken a word to Déruchette. He lived and dreamed near that delightful vision. This was all.

It happened one day that, finding himself by chance at St. Sampson, he had seen Déruchette talking with Mess Lethierry at the door of the Bravées, which opens upon the roadway of the port. Gilliatt ventured to approach very near. He fancied that at the very moment of his passing she had smiled. There was nothing impossible in that.

Déruchette still heard, from time to time, the sound of the bagpipe.

Mess Lethierry had also heard this bagpipe. By degrees he had come to remark this persevering musician under Déruchette's window. A tender strain, too; all the more suspicious. A nocturnal gallant was a thing not to his taste. His wish was to marry Déruchette in his own time, when she was willing and he was willing, purely and simply, without any romance, or music, or anything of that sort. Irritated at it, he had at last kept a watch, and he fancied that he had detected Gilliatt. He passed his fingers through his beard—a sign of anger—and grumbled out, "What has that fellow got to pipe about? He is in love with Déruchette, that is clear. You waste your time, young man. Any one who wants Déruchette must come to me, and not loiter about playing the flute."

An event of importance, long foreseen, occurred soon afterwards. It was announced that the Reverend Jaquemin[Pg 73] Hérode was appointed surrogate of the Bishop of Winchester, dean of the island, and rector of St. Peter's Port, and that he would leave St. Sampson for St. Peter's immediately after his successor should be installed.

It could not be long to the arrival of the new rector. He was a gentleman of Norman extraction, Monsieur Ebenezer Caudray.

Some facts were known about the new rector, which the benevolent and malevolent interpreted in a contrary sense. He was known to be young and poor, but his youth was tempered with much learning, and his poverty by good expectations. In the dialect specially invented for the subject of riches and inheritances, death goes by the name of "expectations." He was the nephew and heir of the aged and opulent dean of

St. Asaph. At the death of this old gentleman he would be a rich man. M. Caudray had distinguished relations. He was almost entitled to the quality of “Honourable.” As regarded his doctrine, people judged differently. He was an Anglican, but, according to the expression of Bishop Tillotson, a “libertine”—that is, in reality, one who was very severe. He repudiated all pharisaism. He was a friend rather of the Presbytery than the Episcopacy. He dreamed of the Primitive Church of the days when even Adam had the right to choose his Eve, and when Frumentinus, Bishop of Hierapolis, carried off a young maiden to make her his wife, and said to her parents, “Her will is such, and such is mine. You are no longer her mother, and you are no longer her father. I am the Bishop of Hierapolis, and this is my wife. Her father is in heaven.” If the common belief could be trusted, M. Caudray subordinated the text, “Honour thy father and thy mother,” to that other text, in his eyes of higher significance, “The woman is the flesh of the man. She shall leave her father and mother to follow her husband.” This tendency, however, to circumscribe the parental authority and to favour religiously every mode of forming the conjugal tie, is peculiar to all Protestantism, particularly in England, and singularly so in America.[Pg 74]

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## V

### A DESERVED SUCCESS HAS ALWAYS ITS DETRACTORS

At this period the affairs of Mess Lethierry were in this position:—The Durande had well fulfilled all his expectations. He had paid his debts, repaired his misfortunes, discharged his obligations at Brême, met his acceptances at St. Malo. He had paid off the mortgage upon his house at the Bravées, and had bought up all the little local rent charges upon the property. He was also the proprietor of a great productive capital. This was the Durande herself. The net revenue from the boat was about a thousand pounds sterling per annum, and the traffic was constantly increasing. Strictly speaking, the Durande constituted his entire fortune. She was also the fortune of the island. The carriage of cattle being one of the most profitable portions of her trade, he had been obliged, in order to facilitate the stowage, and the embarking and disembarking of animals, to do away with the luggage-boxes and the two boats. It was, perhaps, imprudent. The Durande had but one boat—namely, her long-boat; but this was an excellent one.

Ten years had elapsed since Rantaine’s robbery.

This prosperity of the Durande had its weak point. It inspired no confidence. People regarded it as a risk. Lethierry’s good fortune was looked upon as exceptional. He was

considered to have gained by a lucky rashness. Some one in the Isle of Wight who had imitated him had not succeeded. The enterprise had ruined the shareholders. The engines, in fact, were badly constructed. But people shook their heads. Innovations have always to contend with the difficulty that few wish them well. The least false step compromises them.

One of the commercial oracles of the Channel Islands, a certain banker from Paris, named Jauge, being consulted upon a steamboat speculation, was reported to have turned his back, with the remark, "An investment is it you propose to me? Exactly; an investment in smoke."

On the other hand, the sailing vessels had no difficulty in finding capitalists to take shares in a venture. Capital, in fact, was obstinately in favour of sails, and as obstinately against boilers and paddle-wheels. At Guernsey, the Durande was indeed a fact, but steam was not yet an established principle. Such is the fanatical spirit of conservatism in opposition to[Pg 75] progress. They said of Lethierry, "It is all very well; but he could not do it a second time." Far from encouraging, his example inspired timidity. Nobody would have dared to risk another Durande.

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## VI

## THE SLOOP "CASHMERE" SAVES A SHIPWRECKED CREW

The equinoctial gales begin early in the Channel. The sea there is narrow, and the winds disturb it easily. The westerly gales begin from the month of February, and the waves are beaten about from every quarter. Navigation becomes an anxious matter. The people on the coasts look to the signal-post, and begin to watch for vessels in distress. The sea is then like a cut-throat in ambush for his victim. An invisible trumpet sounds the alarm of war with the elements, furious blasts spring up from the horizon, and a terrible wind soon begins to blow. The dark night whistles and howls. In the depth of the clouds the black tempest distends its cheeks, and the storm arises.

The wind is one danger; the fogs are another.

Fogs have from all time been the terror of mariners. In certain fogs microscopic prisms of ice are found in suspension, to which Mariotte attributes halos, mock suns, and paraselenes. Storm-fogs are of a composite character; various gases of unequal specific gravity combine with the vapour of water, and arrange themselves, layer over layer, in an order which divides the dense mist into zones. Below ranges the iodine; above the iodine is the sulphur; above the sulphur the brome; above the brome the

phosphorus. This, in a certain manner, and making allowance for electric and magnetic tension, explains several phenomena, as the St. Elmo's Fire of Columbus and Magellan, the flying stars moving about the ships, of which Seneca speaks; the two flames, Castor and Pollux, mentioned by Plutarch; the Roman legion, whose spears appeared to Cæsar to take fire; the peak of the Chateau of Duino in Friuli which the sentinel made to sparkle by touching it with his lance; and perhaps even those fulgurations from the earth which the ancients called Satan's terrestrial lightnings. At the equator, an immense mist seems permanently to encircle the globe. It is known as the cloud-ring. The function of the cloud-ring is to temper the heat of the tropics, as that of the Gulf-stream is to mitigate[Pg 76] the coldness of the Pole. Under the cloud-ring fogs are fatal. These are what are called *horse latitudes*. It was here that navigators of bygone ages were accustomed to cast their horses into the sea to lighten the ship in stormy weather, and to economise the fresh water when becalmed. Columbus said, "*Nube abaxo ex muerte*," death lurks in the low cloud. The Etruscans, who bear the same relation to meteorology which the Chaldeans did to astronomy, had two high priests—the high priest of the thunder, and the high priest of the clouds. The "fulgurators" observed the lightning, and the weather sages watched the mists. The college of Priest-Augurs was consulted by the Syrians, the Phœnicians, the Pelasgi, and all the primitive navigators of the ancient *Mare Internum*. The origin of tempests was, from that time forward, partially understood. It is intimately connected with the generation of fogs, and is, properly speaking, the same phenomenon. There exist upon the ocean three regions of fogs, one equatorial and two polar. The mariners give them but one name, the *pitch-pot*.

In all latitudes, and particularly in the Channel, the equinoctial fogs are dangerous. They shed a sudden darkness over the sea. One of the perils of fogs, even when not very dense, arises from their preventing the mariners perceiving the change of the bed of the sea by the variations of the colour of the water. The result is a dangerous concealment of the approach of sands and breakers. The vessel steers towards the shoals without receiving any warning. Frequently the fogs leave a ship no resource except to lie-to, or to cast anchor. There are as many shipwrecks from the fogs as from the winds.

After a very violent squall succeeding one of these foggy days, the mail-boat *Cashmere* arrived safely from England. It entered at St. Peter's Port as the first gleam of day appeared upon the sea, and at the very moment when the cannon of Castle Cornet announced the break of day. The sky had cleared: the sloop *Cashmere* was anxiously expected, as she was to bring the new rector of St. Sampson.

A little after the arrival of the sloop, a rumour ran through the town that she had been hailed during the night at sea by a long-boat containing a shipwrecked crew.[Pg 77]

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VII

HOW AN IDLER HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO BE SEEN BY A FISHERMAN

On that very night, at the moment when the wind abated, Gilliatt had gone out with his nets, without, however, taking his famous old Dutch boat too far from the coast.

As he was returning with the rising tide, towards two o'clock in the afternoon, the sun was shining brightly, and he passed before the Beast's Horn to reach the little bay of the Bû de la Rue. At that moment he fancied that he saw, in the projection of the "Gild-Holm-'Ur" seat a shadow, which was not that of the rock. He steered his vessel nearer, and was able to perceive a man sitting in the "Gild-Holm-'Ur." The sea was already very high, the rock encircled by the waves, and escape entirely cut off. Gilliatt made signs to the man. The stranger remained motionless. Gilliatt drew nearer; the man was asleep.

He was attired in black. "He looks like a priest," thought Gilliatt. He approached still nearer, and could distinguish the face of a young man.

The features were unknown to him.

The rock, happily, was peaked; there was a good depth. Gilliatt wore off, and succeeded in skirting the rocky wall. The tide raised the bark so high that Gilliatt, by standing upon the gunwale of the sloop, could touch the man's feet. He raised himself upon the planking, and stretched out his hands. If he had fallen at that moment, it is doubtful if he would have risen again on the water; the waves were rolling in between the boat and the rock, and destruction would have been inevitable. He pulled the foot of the sleeping man. "Ho! there. What are you doing in this place?"

The man aroused, and muttered—

"I was looking about."

He was now completely awake, and continued—

"I have just arrived in this part. I came this way on a pleasure trip. I have passed the night on the sea: the view from here seemed beautiful. I was weary, and fell asleep."

"Ten minutes later, and you would have been drowned."

“Ha!”

“Jump into my bark.”[Pg 78]

Gilliatt kept the bark fast with his foot, clutched the rock with one hand, and stretched out the other to the stranger in black, who sprang quickly into the boat. He was a fine young man.

Gilliatt seized the tiller, and in two minutes his boat entered the bay of the Bû de la Rue.

The young man wore a round hat and a white cravat; and his long black frock-coat was buttoned up to the neck. He had fair hair, which he wore *en couronne*. He had a somewhat feminine cast of features, a clear eye, a grave manner.

Meanwhile the boat had touched the ground. Gilliatt passed the cable through the mooring-ring, then turned and perceived the young man holding out a sovereign in a very white hand.

Gilliatt moved the hand gently away.

There was a pause. The young man was the first to break the silence.

“You have saved me from death.”

“Perhaps,” replied Gilliatt.

The moorings were made fast, and they went ashore.

The stranger continued—

“I owe you my life, sir.”

“No matter.”

This reply from Gilliatt was again followed by a pause.

“Do you belong to this parish?”

“No,” replied Gilliatt.

“To what parish, then?”

Gilliatt lifted up his right hand, pointed to the sky, and said—

“To that yonder.”

The young man bowed, and left him.

After walking a few paces, the stranger stopped, felt in his pocket, drew out a book, and returning towards Gilliatt, offered it to him.

“Permit me to make you a present of this.”

Gilliatt took the volume.

It was a Bible.

An instant after, Gilliatt, leaning upon the parapet, was following the young man with his eyes as he turned the angle of the path which led to St. Sampson.

By little and little he lowered his gaze, forgot all about the stranger—knew no more whether the “Gild-Holm-’Ur” existed. Everything disappeared before him in the bottomless depth of a reverie.[Pg 79]

There was one abyss which swallowed up all his thought. This was Déruchette.

A voice calling him, aroused him from this dream.

“Ho there, Gilliatt!”

He recognised the voice and looked up.

“What is the matter, Sieur Landoys?”

It was, in fact, Sieur Landoys, who was passing along the road about one hundred paces from the Bû de la Rue in his phaeton, drawn by one little horse. He had stopped to hail Gilliatt, but he seemed hurried.

“There is news, Gilliatt.”

“Where is that?”

“At the Bravées.”

“What is it?”

“I am too far off to tell you the story.”

Gilliatt shuddered.

“Is Miss Déruchette going to be married?”

“No; but she had better look out for a husband.”

“What do you mean?”

“Go up to the house, and you will learn.”

And Sieur Landoys whipped on his horse.[Pg 80]

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# BOOK V

## THE REVOLVER

### I

### CONVERSATIONS AT THE JEAN AUBERGE

Sieur Clubin was a man who bided his time. He was short in stature, and his complexion was yellow. He had the strength of a bull. His sea life had not tanned his skin; his flesh had a sallow hue; it was the colour of a wax candle, of which his eyes, too, had something of the steady light. His memory was peculiarly retentive. With him, to have seen a man once, was to have him like a note in a note-book. His quiet glance took possession of you. The pupil of his eye received the impression of a face, and kept it like a portrait. The face might grow old, but Sieur Clubin never lost it; it was impossible to cheat that tenacious memory. Sieur Clubin was curt in speech, grave in manner, bold in action. No gestures were ever indulged in by him. An air of candour won everybody to him at first; many people thought him artless. He had a wrinkle in the corner of his eye, astonishingly expressive of simplicity. As we have said, no abler mariner existed; no one like him for reefing a sail, for keeping a vessel's head to the wind, or the sails well set. Never did reputation for religion and integrity stand higher than his. To have suspected him would have been to bring yourself under suspicion. He was on terms of intimacy with Monsieur Rébuchet, a money-changer at St. Malo, who lived in the Rue St. Vincent, next door to the armourer's; and Monsieur Rébuchet would say, "I would leave my shop in Clubin's hands."

Sieur Clubin was a widower; his wife, like himself, had enjoyed a high reputation for probity. She had died with a fame for incorruptible virtue. If the bailli had whispered gallant things in her ear, she would have impeached him before the king. If a saint had made love to her, she would have told it to the priest. This couple, Sieur and Dame Clubin, had realised in Torteval the ideal of the English epithet "respect[Pg 81]able." Dame Clubin's reputation was as the snowy whiteness of the swan; Sieur Clubin's like that of ermine itself—a spot would have been fatal to him. He could hardly have picked up a pin without making inquiries for the owner. He would send round the town-crier about a box of matches. One day he went into a wine-shop at St. Servan, and said to the man who kept it, "Three years ago I breakfasted here; you made a mistake in the bill;" and he returned the man thirteen sous. He was the very

personification of probity, with a certain compression of the lips indicative of watchfulness.

He seemed, indeed, always on the watch—for what? For rogues probably.

Every Tuesday he commanded the Durande on her passage from Guernsey to St. Malo. He arrived at St. Malo on the Tuesday evening, stayed two days there to discharge and take in a new cargo, and started again for Guernsey on Friday morning.

There was at that period, at St. Malo, a little tavern near the harbour, which was called the "Jean Auberge."

The construction of the modern quays swept away this house. At this period, the sea came up as far as the St. Vincent and Dinan gates. St. Merlan and St. Servan communicated with each other by covered carts and other vehicles, which passed to and fro among vessels lying high and dry, avoiding the buoys, the anchors, and cables, and running the risk now and then of smashing their leathern hoods against the lowered yards, or the end of a jibboom. Between the tides, the coachmen drove their horses over those sands, where, six hours afterwards, the winds would be beating the rolling waves. The four-and-twenty carrying dogs of St. Malo, who tore to pieces a naval officer in 1770, were accustomed to prowl about this beach. This excess of zeal on their part led to the destruction of the pack. Their nocturnal barkings are no longer heard between the little and the great Talard.

Sieur Clubin was accustomed to stay at the Jean Auberge. The French office of the Durande was held there.

The custom-house officers and coast-guardmen came to take their meals and to drink at the Jean Auberge. They had their separate tables. The custom-house officers of Binic found it convenient for the service to meet there with their brother officers of St. Malo.

Captains of vessels came there also; but they ate at another table.[Pg 82]

Sieur Clubin sat sometimes at one, sometimes at the other table, but preferred the table of the custom-house men to that of the sea captains. He was always welcome at either.

The tables were well served. There were strange drinks especially provided for foreign sailors. A dandy sailor from Bilboa could have been supplied there with a *helada*. People drank stout there, as at Greenwich; or brown *gueuse*, as at Antwerp.

Masters of vessels who came from long voyages and privateersmen sometimes appeared at the captains' table, where they exchanged news. "How are sugars? That commission is only for small lots.—The brown kinds, however, are going off. Three thousand bags of East India, and five hundred hogsheads of Sagua.—Take my word, the opposition will end by defeating Villèle.—What about indigo? Only seven serons of Guatemala changed hands.—The *Nanino-Julia* is in the roads; a pretty three-master from Brittany.—The two cities of La Plata are at loggerheads again.—When Monte Video gets fat, Buenos Ayres grows lean.—It has been found necessary to transfer the cargo of the *Regina-Cœli*, which has been condemned at Callao.—Cocoas go off briskly.—Caraque bags are quoted at one hundred and thirty-four, and Trinidad's at seventy-three.—It appears that at the review in the Champ de Mars, the people cried, 'Down with the ministers!'—The raw salt Saladeros hides are selling—ox-hides at sixty francs, and cows' at forty-eight.—Have they passed the Balkan?—What is Diebitsch about?—Aniseed is in demand at San Francisco. Plagniol olive oil is quiet.—Gruyère cheese, in bulk, is thirty-two francs the quintal.—Well, is Leon XII. dead?" etc., etc.

All these things were talked about and commented on aloud. At the table of the custom-house and coast-guard officers they spoke in a lower key.

Matters of police and revenue on the coast and in the ports require, in fact, a little more privacy, and a little less clearness in the conversation.

The sea-captains' table was presided over by an old captain of a large vessel, M. Gertrais-Gaboureau. M. Gertrais-Gaboureau could hardly be regarded as a man; he was rather a living barometer. His long life at sea had given him a surprising power of prognosticating the state of the weather. He seemed to issue a decree for the weather to-morrow. He sounded the winds, and felt the pulse, as it were, of the tides. He might be imagined requesting the clouds to show their tongue—that is to[Pg 83] say, their forked lightnings. He was the physician of the wave, the breeze, and the squall. The ocean was his patient. He had travelled round the world like a doctor going his visits, examining every kind of climate in its good and bad condition. He was profoundly versed in the pathology of the seasons. Sometimes he would be heard delivering himself in this fashion—"The barometer descended in 1796 to three degrees below tempest point." He was a sailor from real love of the sea. He hated England as much as he liked the ocean. He had carefully studied English seamanship, and considered himself to have discovered its weak point. He would explain how the *Sovereign* of 1637 differed from the *Royal William* of 1670, and from the *Victory* of 1775. He compared their build as to their forecastles and quarter-decks. He looked back with regret to the towers upon the deck, and the funnel-shaped tops of the *Great Harry* of 1514—probably regarding them from the point of view of convenient lodging-places

for French cannon-balls. In his eyes, nations only existed for their naval institutions. He indulged in some odd figures of speech on this subject. He considered the term "The Trinity House" as sufficiently indicating England. The "Northern Commissioners" were in like manner synonymous in his mind with Scotland; the "Ballast Board," with Ireland. He was full of nautical information. He was, in himself, a marine alphabet and almanack, a tariff and low-water mark, all combined. He knew by heart all the lighthouse dues—particularly those of the English coast—one penny per ton for passing before this; one farthing before that. He would tell you that the Small Rock Light which once used to burn two hundred gallons of oil, now consumes fifteen hundred. Once, aboard ship, he was attacked by a dangerous disease, and was believed to be dying. The crew assembled round his hammock, and in the midst of his groans and agony he addressed the chief carpenter with the words, "You had better make a mortise in each side of the main caps, and put in a bit of iron to help pass the top ropes through." His habit of command had given to his countenance an expression of authority.

It was rare that the subjects of conversation at the captains' table and at that of the custom-house men were the same. This, however, did happen to be the case in the first days of that month of February to which the course of this history has now brought us. The three-master *Tamaulipas*, Captain Zuela,[Pg 84] arrived from Chili, and bound thither again, was the theme of discussion at both tables.

At the captains' table they were talking of her cargo; and at that of the custom-house people, of certain circumstances connected with her recent proceedings.

Captain Zuela, of Copiapo, was partly a Chilian and partly a Columbian. He had taken a part in the War of Independence in a true independent fashion, adhering sometimes to Bolivar, sometimes to Morillo, according as he had found it to his interest. He had enriched himself by serving all causes. No man in the world could have been more Bourbonist, more Bonapartist, more absolutist, more liberal, more atheistical, or more devoutly catholic. He belonged to that great and renowned party which may be called the Lucrative party. From time to time he made his appearance in France on commercial voyages; and if report spoke truly, he willingly gave a passage to fugitives of any kind—bankrupts or political refugees, it was all the same to him, provided they could pay. His mode of taking them aboard was simple. The fugitive waited upon a lonely point of the coast, and at the moment of setting sail, Zuela would detach a small boat to fetch him. On his last voyage he had assisted in this way an outlaw and fugitive from justice, named Berton; and on this occasion he was suspected of being about to aid the flight of the men implicated in the affair of the Bidassoa. The police were informed, and had their eye upon him.

This period was an epoch of flights and escapes. The Restoration in France was a reactionary movement. Revolutions are fruitful of voluntary exile; and restorations of wholesale banishments. During the first seven or eight years which followed the return of the Bourbons, panic was universal—in finance, in industry, in commerce, men felt the ground tremble beneath them. Bankruptcies were numerous in the commercial world; in the political, there was a general rush to escape. Lavalette had taken flight, Lefebvre Desnouettes had taken flight, Delon had taken flight. Special tribunals were again in fashion—*plus* Treetaillon. People instinctively shunned the Pont de Saumur, the Esplanade de la Réole, the wall of the Observatoire in Paris, the tower of Taurias d'Avignon—dismal landmarks in history where the period of reaction has left its sign-spots, on which the marks of that blood-stained hand are still visible. In London the Thistlewood affair, with its ramifications in France: in Paris the Trogoff trial, with its ramifications in Belgium, Switzerland, and Italy, had increased the[Pg 85] motives for anxiety and flight, and given an impetus to that mysterious rout which left so many gaps in the social system of that day. To find a place of safety, this was the general care. To be implicated was to be ruined. The spirit of the military tribunals had survived their institution. Sentences were matters of favour. People fled to Texas, to the Rocky Mountains, to Peru, to Mexico. The men of the Loire, traitors then, but now regarded as patriots, had founded the *Champ d'Asile*. Béranger in one of his songs says—

"Barbarians! we are Frenchmen born;
Pity us, glorious, yet forlorn."

Self-banishment was the only resource left. Nothing, perhaps, seems simpler than flight, but that monosyllable has a terrible significance. Every obstacle is in the way of the man who slips away. Taking to flight necessitates disguise. Persons of importance—even illustrious characters—were reduced to these expedients, only fit for malefactors. Their independent habits rendered it difficult for them to escape through the meshes of authority. A rogue who violates the conditions of his ticket-of-leave comports himself before the police as innocently as a saint; but imagine innocence constrained to act a part; virtue disguising its voice; a glorious reputation hiding under a mask. Yonder passer-by is a man of well-earned celebrity; he is in quest of a false passport. The equivocal proceedings of one absconding from the reach of the law is no proof that he is not a hero. Ephemeral but characteristic features of the time of which our so-called regular history takes no note, but which the true painter of the age will bring out into relief. Under cover of these flights and concealments of honest men, genuine rogues, less watched and suspected, managed often to get clear off. A scoundrel, who found it convenient to disappear, would take advantage of

the general pell-mell, tack himself on to the political refugees, and, thanks to his greater skill in the art, would contrive to appear in that dim twilight more honest even than his honest neighbours. Nothing looks more awkward and confused sometimes than honesty unjustly condemned. It is out of its element, and is almost sure to commit itself.

It is a curious fact, that this voluntary expatriation, particularly with honest folks, appeared to lead to every strange turn of fortune. The modicum of civilisation which a scamp brought with him from London or Paris became, perhaps, a valuable stock in trade in some primitive country, ingratiated him with[Pg 86] the people, and enabled him to strike into new paths. There is nothing impossible in a man's escaping thus from the laws, to reappear elsewhere as a dignitary among the priesthood. There was something phantasmagorial in these sudden disappearances; and more than one such flight has led to events like the marvels of a dream. An escapade of this kind, indeed, seemed to end naturally in the wild and wonderful; as when some broken bankrupt suddenly decamps to turn up again twenty years later as Grand Vizier to the Mogul, or as a king in Tasmania.

Rendering assistance to these fugitives was an established trade, and, looking to the abundance of business of that kind, was a highly profitable one. It was generally carried on as a supplementary branch of certain recognised kinds of commerce. A person, for instance, desiring to escape to England, applied to the smugglers; one who desired to get to America, had recourse to sea-captains like Zuela.

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II

CLUBIN OBSERVES SOMEONE

Zuela came sometimes to take refreshment at the Jean Auberge. Clubin knew him by sight.

For that matter Clubin was not proud. He did not disdain even to know scamps by sight. He went so far sometimes as to cultivate even a closer acquaintance with them; giving his hand in the open street, or saying good-day to them. He talked English with the smugglers, and jabbered Spanish with the *contrebandistas*. On this subject he had at command a number of apologetic phrases. "Good," he said, "can be extracted out of the knowledge of evil. The gamekeeper may find advantage in knowing the poacher. The good pilot may sound the depths of a pirate, who is only a sort of hidden rock. I test the quality of a scoundrel as a doctor will test a poison." There was no answering a battery of proverbs like this. Everybody gave Clubin credit for his

shrewdness. People praised him for not indulging in a ridiculous delicacy. Who, then, should dare to speak scandal of him on this point? Everything he did was evidently "for the good of the service." With him, all was straightforward. Nothing could stain his good fame. Crystal might more easily become sullied. This general confidence in[Pg 87] him was the natural reward of a long life of integrity, the crowning advantage of a settled reputation. Whatever Clubin might do, or appear to do, was sure to be interpreted favourably. He had attained almost to a state of impeccability. Over and above this, "he is very wary," people said: and from a situation which in others would have given rise to suspicion, his integrity would extricate itself, with a still greater halo of reputation for ability. This reputation for ability mingled harmoniously with his fame for perfect simplicity of character. Great simplicity and great talents in conjunction are not uncommon. The compound constitutes one of the varieties of the virtuous man, and one of the most valuable. Sieur Clubin was one of those men who might be found in intimate conversation with a sharper or a thief, without suffering any diminution of respect in the minds of their neighbours.

The *Tamaulipas* had completed her loading. She was ready for sea, and was preparing to sail very shortly.

One Tuesday evening the Durande arrived at St. Malo while it was still broad daylight. Sieur Clubin, standing upon the bridge of the vessel, and superintending the manœuvres necessary for getting her into port, perceived upon the sandy beach near the Petit-Bey, two men, who were conversing between the rocks, in a solitary spot. He observed them with his sea-glass, and recognised one of the men. It was Captain Zuela. He seemed to recognise the other also.

This other was a person of high stature, a little grey. He wore the broad-brimmed hat and the sober clothing of the Society of Friends. He was probably a Quaker. He lowered his gaze with an air of extreme diffidence.

On arriving at the Jean Auberge, Sieur Clubin learnt that the *Tamaulipas* was preparing to sail in about ten days.

It has since become known that he obtained information on some other points.

That night he entered the gunsmith's shop in the St. Vincent Street, and said to the master:

"Do you know what a revolver is?"

"Yes," replied the gunsmith. "It is an American weapon."

"It is a pistol with which a man can carry on a conversation."

“Exactly: an instrument which comprises in itself both the question and the answer.”

“And the rejoinder too.”

“Precisely, Monsieur Clubin. A rotatory clump of barrels.”

“I shall want five or six balls.”[Pg 88]

The gunmaker twisted the corner of his lip, and made that peculiar noise with which, when accompanied by a toss of the head, Frenchmen express admiration.

“The weapon is a good one, Monsieur Clubin.”

“I want a revolver with six barrels.”

“I have not one.”

“What! and you a gunmaker!”

“I do not keep such articles yet. You see, it is a new thing. It is only just coming into vogue. French makers, as yet, confine themselves to the simple pistol.”

“Nonsense.”

“It has not yet become an article of commerce.”

“Nonsense, I say.”

“I have excellent pistols.”

“I want a revolver.”

“I agree that it is more useful. Stop, Monsieur Clubin!”

“What?”

“I believe I know where there is one at this moment in St. Malo; to be had a bargain.”

“A revolver?”

“Yes.”

“For sale?”

“Yes.”

“Where is that?”

“I believe I know; or I can find out.”

“When can you give me an answer?”

“A bargain; but of good quality.”

“When shall I return?”

“If I procure you a revolver, remember, it will be a good one.”

“When will you give me an answer?”

“After your next voyage.”

“Do not mention that it is for me,” said Clubin.

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III

CLUBIN CARRIES AWAY SOMETHING AND BRINGS BACK NOTHING

Sieur Clubin completed the loading of the Durande, embarked a number of cattle and some passengers, and left St. Malo for Guernsey, as usual, on the Friday morning.

On that same Friday, when the vessel had gained the open,[Pg 89] which permits the captain to absent himself a moment from the place of command, Clubin entered his cabin, shut himself in, took a travelling bag which he kept there, put into one of its compartments some biscuit, some boxes of preserves, a few pounds of chocolate in sticks, a chronometer, and a sea telescope, and passed through the handles a cord, ready prepared to sling it if necessary. Then he descended into the hold, went into the compartment where the cables are kept, and was seen to come up again with one of those knotted ropes heavy with pieces of metal, which are used for ship caulkers at sea and by robbers ashore. Cords of this kind are useful in climbing.

Having arrived at Guernsey, Clubin repaired to Torteval. He took with him the travelling bag and the knotted cord, but did not bring them back again.

Let us repeat once for all, the Guernsey which we are describing is that ancient Guernsey which no longer exists, and of which it would be impossible to find a parallel now anywhere except in the country. There it is still flourishing, but in the towns it has passed away. The same remarks apply to Jersey. St. Helier’s is as civilised as Dieppe, St. Peter’s Port as L’Orient. Thanks to the progress of civilisation, thanks to the admirably enterprising spirit of that brave island people, everything has been changed during the last forty years in the Norman Archipelago. Where there was darkness there is now light. With these premises let us proceed.

At that period, then, which is already so far removed from us as to have become historical, smuggling was carried on very extensively in the Channel. The smuggling

vessels abounded, particularly on the western coast of Guernsey. People of that peculiarly clever kind who know, even in the smallest details, what went on half a century ago, will even cite you the names of these suspicious craft, which were almost always Austrians or Guiposeans. It is certain that a week scarcely ever passed without one or two being seen either in Saint's Bay or at Pleinmont. Their coming and going had almost the character of a regular service. A cavern in the cliffs at Sark was called then, and is still called, the "Shops" ("Les Boutiques"), from its being the place where these smugglers made their bargains with the purchasers of their merchandise. This sort of traffic had in the Channel a dialect of its own, a vocabulary of contraband technicalities now forgotten, and which was to the Spanish what the "Levantine" is to the Italian.

On many parts of the English coast smuggling had a secret[Pg 90] but cordial understanding with legitimate and open commerce. It had access to the house of more than one great financier, by the back-stairs it is true; and its influence extended itself mysteriously through all the commercial world, and the intricate ramifications of manufacturing industry. Merchant on one side, smuggler on the other; such was the key to the secret of many great fortunes. Séguin affirmed it of Bourgain, Bourgain of Séguin. We do not vouch for their accusations; it is possible that they were calumniating each other. However this may have been, it is certain that the contraband trade, though hunted down by the law, was flourishing enough in certain financial circles. It had relations with "the very best society." Thus the brigand Mandrin, in other days, found himself occasionally *tête-à-tête* with the Count of Charolais; for this underhand trade often contrived to put on a very respectable appearance; kept a house of its own with an irreproachable exterior.

All this necessitated a host of manœuvres and connivances, which required impenetrable secrecy. A contrabandist was entrusted with a good many things, and knew how to keep them secret. An inviolable confidence was the condition of his existence. The first quality, in fact, in a smuggler was strict honour in his own circle. No discreetness, no smuggling. Fraud has its secrets like the priest's confessional.

These secrets were indeed, as a rule, faithfully kept. The contrabandist swore to betray nothing, and he kept his word; nobody was more trustworthy than the genuine smuggler. The Judge Alcade of Oyarzun captured a smuggler one day, and put him to torture to compel him to disclose the name of the capitalist who secretly supported him. The smuggler refused to tell. The capitalist in question was the Judge Alcade himself. Of these two accomplices, the judge and the smuggler, the one had been compelled, in order to appear in the eyes of the world to fulfil the law, to put the other to the torture, which the other had patiently borne for the sake of his oath.

The two most famous smugglers who haunted Pleinmont at that period were Blasco and Blasquito. They were *Tocayos*. This was a sort of Spanish or Catholic relationship which consisted in having the same patron saint in heaven; a thing, it will be admitted, not less worthy of consideration than having the same father upon earth.

When a person was initiated into the furtive ways of the contraband business, nothing was more easy, or, from a certain[Pg 91] point of view, more troublesome. It was sufficient to have no fear of dark nights, to repair to Pleinmont, and to consult the oracle located there.

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IV

PLEINMONT

Pleinmont, near Torteval, is one of the three corners of the island of Guernsey. At the extremity of the cape there rises a high turfy hill, which looks over the sea.

The height is a lonely place. All the more lonely from there being one solitary house there.

This house adds a sense of terror to that of solitude.

It is popularly believed to be haunted.

Haunted or not, its aspect is singular.

Built of granite, and rising only one story high, it stands in the midst of the grassy solitude. It is in a perfectly good condition as far as exterior is concerned; the walls are thick and the roof is sound. Not a stone is wanting in the sides, not a tile upon the roof. A brick-built chimney-stack forms the angle of the roof. The building turns its back to the sea, being on that side merely a blank wall. On examining this wall, however, attentively, the visitor perceives a little window bricked up. The two gables have three dormer windows, one fronting the east, the others fronting the west, but both are bricked up in like manner. The front, which looks inland, has alone a door and windows. This door, too, is walled in, as are also the two windows of the ground-floor. On the first floor—and this is the feature which is most striking as you approach—there are two open windows; but these are even more suspicious than the blind windows. Their open squares look dark even in broad day, for they have no panes of glass, or even window-frames. They open simply upon the dusk within. They strike the imagination like hollow eye-sockets in a human face. Inside all is deserted. Through the gaping casements you may mark the ruin within. No panellings, no woodwork; all

bare stone. It is like a windowed sepulchre, giving liberty to the spectres to look out upon the daylight world. The rains sap the foundations on the seaward side. A few nettles, shaken by the breeze, flourish in the lower part of the walls. Far around the horizon there is no other human habitation. The house is a void; the abode of silence: but if you place your ear against the wall and[Pg 92] listen, you may distinguish a confused noise now and then, like the flutter of wings. Over the walled door, upon the stone which forms its architrave, are sculptured these letters, "Elm-Pbilg," with the date "1780."

The dark shadow of night and the mournful light of the moon find entrance there.

The sea completely surrounds the house. Its situation is magnificent; but for that reason its aspect is more sinister. The beauty of the spot becomes a puzzle. Why does not a human family take up its abode here? The place is beautiful, the house well-built. Whence this neglect? To these questions, obvious to the reason, succeed others, suggested by the reverie which the place inspires. Why is this cultivatable garden uncultivated? No master for it; and the bricked-up doorway? What has happened to the place? Why is it shunned by men? What business is done here? If none, why is there no one here? Is it only when all the rest of the world are asleep that some one in this spot is awake? Dark squalls, wild winds, birds of prey, strange creatures, unknown forms, present themselves to the mind, and connect themselves somehow with this deserted house. For what class of wayfarers can this be the hostelry? You imagine to yourself whirlwinds of rain and hail beating in at the open casements, and wandering through the rooms. Tempests have left their vague traces upon the interior walls. The chambers, though walled and covered in, are visited by the hurricanes. Has the house been the scene of some great crime? You may almost fancy that this spectral dwelling, given up to solitude and darkness, might be heard calling aloud for succour. Does it remain silent? Do voices indeed issue from it? What business has it on hand in this lonely place? The mystery of the dark hours rests securely here. Its aspect is disquieting at noonday; what must it be at midnight? The dreamer asks himself—for dreams have their coherence—what this house may be between the dusk of evening and the twilight of approaching dawn? Has the vast supernatural world some relation with this deserted height, which sometimes compels it to arrest its movements here, and to descend and to become visible? Do the scattered elements of the spirit world whirl around it? Does the impalpable take form and substance here? Insoluble riddles! A holy awe is in the very stones; that dim twilight has surely relations with the infinite Unknown. When the sun has gone down, the song of the birds will be hushed, the goatherd behind the hills will go[Pg 93] homeward with his goats; reptiles, taking courage from the gathering darkness,

will creep through the fissures of rocks; the stars will begin to appear, night will come, but yonder two blank casements will still be staring at the sky. They open to welcome spirits and apparitions; for it is by the names of apparitions, ghosts, phantom faces vaguely distinct, masks in the lurid light, mysterious movements of minds, and shadows, that the popular faith, at once ignorant and profound, translates the sombre relations of this dwelling with the world of darkness.

The house is "haunted;" the popular phrase comprises everything.

Credulous minds have their explanation; common-sense thinkers have theirs also. "Nothing is more simple," say the latter, "than the history of the house. It is an old observatory of the time of the revolutionary wars and the days of smuggling. It was built for such objects. The wars being ended, the house was abandoned; but it was not pulled down, as it might one day again become useful. The door and windows have been walled to prevent people entering, or doing injury to the interior. The walls of the windows, on the three sides which face the sea, have been bricked up against the winds of the south and south-west. That is all."

The ignorant and the credulous, however, are not satisfied. In the first place, the house was not built at the period of the wars of the Revolution. It bears the date "1780," which was anterior to the Revolution. In the next place it was not built for an observatory. It bears the letters "Elm-Pbilg," which are the double monogram of two families, and which indicate, according to usage, that the house was built for the use of a newly-married couple. Then it has certainly been inhabited: why then should it be abandoned? If the door and windows were bricked up to prevent people entering the house only, why were two windows left open? Why are there no shutters, no window-frames, no glass? Why were the walls bricked in on one side if not on the other? The wind is prevented from entering from the south; but why is it allowed to enter from the north?

The credulous are wrong, no doubt; but it is clear that the common-sense thinkers have not discovered the key to the mystery. The problem remains still unsolved.

It is certain that the house is generally believed to have been more useful than inconvenient to the smugglers.

The growth of superstitious terror tends to deprive facts of[Pg 94] their true proportions. Without doubt, many of the nocturnal phenomena which have, by little and little, secured to the building the reputation of being haunted, might be explained by obscure and furtive visits, by brief sojourns of sailors near the spot, and sometimes by the precaution, sometimes by the daring, of men engaged in certain suspicious

occupations concealing themselves for their dark purposes, or allowing themselves to be seen in order to inspire dread.

At this period, already a remote one, many daring deeds were possible. The police—particularly in small places—was by no means as efficient as in these days.

Add to this, that if the house was really, as was said, a resort of the smugglers, their meetings there must, up to a certain point, have been safe from interruptions precisely because the house was dreaded by the superstitious people of the country. Its ghostly reputation prevented its being visited for other reasons. People do not generally apply to the police, or officers of customs, on the subject of spectres. The superstitious rely on making the sign of the cross; not on magistrates and indictments. There is always a tacit connivance, involuntary it may be, but not the less real, between the objects which inspire fear and their victims. The terror-stricken feel a sort of culpability in having encountered their terrors; they imagine themselves to have unveiled a secret; and they have an inward fear, unknown even to themselves, of aggravating their guilt, and exciting the anger of the apparitions. All this makes them discreet. And over and above this reason, the very instinct of the credulous is silence; dread is akin to dumbness; the terrified speak little; horror seems always to whisper, "Hush!"

It must be remembered that this was a period when the Guernsey peasants believed that the Mystery of the Holy Manger is repeated by oxen and asses every year on a fixed day; a period when no one would have dared to enter a stable at night for fear of coming upon the animals on their knees.

If the local legends and stories of the people can be credited, the popular superstition went so far as to fasten to the walls of the house at Pleinmont things of which the traces are still visible—rats without feet, bats without wings, and bodies of other dead animals. Here, too, were seen toads crushed between the pages of a Bible, bunches of yellow lupins, and other strange offerings, placed there by imprudent passers-by at night, who, having fancied that they had seen something, hoped by these small sacrifices to obtain pardon, and to appease[Pg 95] the ill-humours of were-wolves and evil spirits. In all times, believers of this kind have flourished; some even in very high places. Cæsar consulted Saganius, and Napoleon Mademoiselle Lenormand. There are a kind of consciences so tender, that they must seek indulgences even from Beelzebub. "May God do, and Satan not undo," was one of the prayers of Charles the Fifth. They come to persuade themselves that they may commit sins even against the Evil One; and one of their cherished objects was, to be irreproachable even in the eyes of Satan. We find here an explanation of those adorations sometimes paid to infernal

spirits. It is only one more species of fanaticism. Sins against the devil certainly exist in certain morbid imaginations. The fancy that they have violated the laws of the lower regions torments certain eccentric casuists; they are haunted with scruples even about offending the demons. A belief in the efficacy of devotions to the spirits of the Brocken or Armuyr, a notion of having committed sins against hell, visionary penances for imaginary crimes, avowals of the truth to the spirit of falsehood, self-accusation before the origin of all evil, and confessions in an inverted sense—are all realities, or things at least which have existed. The annals of criminal procedure against witchcraft and magic prove this in every page. Human folly unhappily extends even thus far: when terror seizes upon a man he does not stop easily. He dreams of imaginary faults, imaginary purifications, and clears out his conscience with the old witches' broom.

Be this as it may, if the house at Pleinmont had its secrets, it kept them to itself; except by some rare chance, no one went there to see. It was left entirely alone. Few people, indeed, like to run the risk of an encounter with the other world.

Owing to the terror which it inspired, and which kept at a distance all who could observe or bear testimony on the subject, it had always been easy to obtain an entrance there at night by means of a rope ladder, or even by the use of the first ladder coming to hand in one of the neighbouring fields. A consignment of goods or provisions left there might await in perfect safety the time and opportunity for a furtive embarkation. Tradition relates that forty years ago a fugitive—for political offences as some affirm, for commercial as others say—remained for some time concealed in the haunted house at Pleinmont; whence he finally succeeded in embarking in a fishing-boat for England. From England a passage is easily obtained to America.[Pg 96]

Tradition also avers that provisions deposited in this house remain there untouched, Lucifer and the smugglers having an interest in inducing whoever places them there to return.

From the summit of the house, there is a view to the south of the Hanway Rocks, at about a mile from the shore.

These rocks are famous. They have been guilty of all the evil deeds of which rocks are capable. They are the most ruthless destroyers of the sea. They lie in a treacherous ambush for vessels in the night. They have contributed to the enlargement of the cemeteries at Torteval and Rocquaine.

A lighthouse was erected upon these rocks in 1862. At the present day, the Hanways light the way for the vessels which they once lured to destruction; the destroyer in ambush now bears a lighted torch in his hand; and mariners seek in the horizon, as a

protector and a guide, the rock which they used to fly as a pitiless enemy. It gives confidence by night in that vast space where it was so long a terror—like a robber converted into a gendarme.

There are three Hanways: the Great Hanway, the Little Hanway, and the Mauve. It is upon the Little Hanway that the red light is placed at the present time.

This reef of rocks forms part of a group of peaks, some beneath the sea, some rising out of it. It towers above them all; like a fortress, it has advanced works: on the side of the open sea, a chain of thirteen rocks; on the north, two breakers—the High Fourquiés, the Needles, and a sandbank called the Hérouée. On the south, three rocks—the Cat Rock, the Percée, and the Herpin Rock; then two banks—the South Bank and the Muet: besides which, there is, on the side opposite Pleinmont, the Tas de Pois d'Aval.

To swim across the channel from the Hanways to Pleinmont is difficult, but not impossible. We have already said that this was one of the achievements of Clubin. The expert swimmer who knows this channel can find two resting-places, the Round Rock, and further on, a little out of the course, to the left, the Red Rock.

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## V

## THE BIRDS'-NESTERS

It was near the period of that Saturday which was passed by Sieur Clubin at Torteval that a curious incident occurred, which was little heard of at the time, and which did not generally tran[Pg 97]spire till a long time afterwards. For many things, as we have already observed, remain undivulged, simply by reason of the terror which they have caused in those who have witnessed them.

In the night-time between Saturday and Sunday—we are exact in the matter of the date, and we believe it to be correct—three boys climbed up the hill at Pleinmont. The boys returned to the village: they came from the seashore. They were what are called, in the corrupt French of that part, "déniquoiseaux," or birds'-nesters. Wherever there are cliffs and cleft-rocks overhanging the sea, the young birds'-nesters abound. The reader will remember that Gilliatt interfered in this matter for the sake of the birds as well as for the sake of the children.

The "déniquoiseaux" are a sort of sea-urchins, and are not a very timid species.

The night was very dark. Dense masses of cloud obscured the zenith. Three o'clock had sounded in the steeple of Torteval which is round and pointed like a magician's hat.

Why did the boys return so late? Nothing more simple. They had been searching for sea-gulls' nests in the Tas de Pois d'Aval. The season having been very mild, the pairing of the birds had begun very early. The children watching the fluttering of the male and female about their nests, and excited by the pursuit, had forgotten the time. The waters had crept up around them; they had no time to regain the little bay in which they had moored their boat, and they were compelled to wait upon one of the peaks of the Tas de Pois for the ebb of the tide. Hence their late return. Mothers wait on such occasions in feverish anxiety for the return of their children, and when they find them safe, give vent to their joy in the shape of anger, and relieve their tears by dealing them a sound drubbing. The boys accordingly hastened their steps, but in fear and trembling. Their haste was of that sort which is glad of an excuse for stopping, and which is not inconsistent with a reluctance to reach their destination; for they had before them the prospect of warm embraces, to be followed with an inevitable thrashing.

One only of the boys had nothing of this to fear. He was an orphan: a French boy, without father or mother, and perfectly content just then with his motherless condition; for nobody taking any interest in him, his back was safe from the dreaded blows. The two others were natives of Guernsey, and belonged to the parish of Torteval.

Having climbed the grassy hill, the three birds'-nesters[Pg 98] reached the tableland on which was situate the haunted house.

They began by being in fear, which is the proper frame of mind of every passer-by; and particularly of every child at that hour and in that place.

They had a strong desire to take to their heels as fast as possible, and a strong desire, also, to stay and look.

They did stop.

They looked towards the solitary building.

It was all dark and terrible.

It stood in the midst of the solitary plain—an obscure block, a hideous but symmetrical excrescence; a high square mass with right-angled corners, like an immense altar in the darkness.

The first thought of the boys was to run: the second was to draw nearer. They had never seen this house before. There is such a thing as a desire to be frightened arising from curiosity. They had a little French boy with them, which emboldened them to approach.

It is well known that the French have no fear.

Besides, it is reassuring to have company in danger; to be frightened in the company of two others is encouraging.

And then they were a sort of hunters accustomed to peril. They were children; they were used to search, to rummage, to spy out hidden things. They were in the habit of peeping into holes; why not into this hole? Hunting is exciting. Looking into birds' nests perhaps gives an itch for looking a little into a nest of ghosts. A rummage in the dark regions. Why not?

From prey to prey, says the proverb, we come to the devil. After the birds, the demons. The boys were on the way to learn the secret of those terrors of which their parents had told them. To be on the track of hobgoblin tales—nothing could be more attractive. To have long stories to tell like the good housewives. The notion was tempting.

All this mixture of ideas, in their state of half-confusion, half-instinct, in the minds of the Guernsey birds'-nesters, finally screwed their courage to the point. They approached the house.

The little fellow who served them as a sort of moral support in the adventure was certainly worthy of their confidence. He was a bold boy—an apprentice to a ship-caulker; one of those children who have already become men. He slept on a little straw in a shed in the ship-caulker's yard, getting his own living, having red hair, and a loud voice; climbing easily up[Pg 99] walls and trees, not encumbered with prejudices in the matter of property in the apples within his reach; a lad who had worked in the repairing dock for vessels of war—a child of chance, a happy orphan, born in France, no one knew exactly where; ready to give a centime to a beggar; a mischievous fellow, but a good one at heart; one who had talked to Parisians. At this time he was earning a shilling a day by caulking the fishermen's boats under repair at the Pêqueries. When he felt inclined he gave himself a holiday, and went birds'-nesting. Such was the little French boy.

The solitude of the place impressed them with a strange feeling of dread. They felt the threatening aspect of the silent house. It was wild and savage. The naked and

deserted plateau terminated in a precipice at a short distance from its steep incline. The sea below was quiet. There was no wind. Not a blade of grass stirred.

The birds'-nesters advanced by slow steps, the French boy at their head, and looking towards the house.

One of them, afterwards relating the story, or as much of it as had remained in his head, added, "It did not speak."

They came nearer, holding their breath, as one might approach a savage animal.

They had climbed the hill at the side of the house which descended to seaward towards a little isthmus of rocks almost inaccessible. Thus they had come pretty near to the building; but they saw only the southern side, which was all walled up. They did not dare to approach by the other side, where the terrible windows were.

They grew bolder, however; the caulker's apprentice whispered, "Let's veer to larboard. That's the handsome side. Let's have a look at the black windows."

The little band accordingly "veered to larboard," and came round to the other side of the house.

The two windows were lighted up.

The boys took to their heels.

When they had got to some distance, the French boy, however, returned.

"Hillo!" said he, "the lights have vanished."

The light at the windows had, indeed, disappeared. The outline of the building was seen as sharply defined as if stamped out with a punch against the livid sky.

Their fear was not abated, but their curiosity had increased. The birds'-nesters approached.[Pg 100]

Suddenly the light reappeared at both windows at the same moment.

The two young urchins from Torteval took to their heels and vanished. The daring French boy did not advance, but he kept his ground.

He remained motionless, confronting the house and watching it.

The light disappeared, and appeared again once more. Nothing could be more horrible. The reflection made a vague streak of light upon the grass, wet with the night

dew. All of a moment the light cast upon the walls of the house two huge dark profiles, and the shadows of enormous heads.

The house, however, being without ceilings, and having nothing left but its four walls and roof, one window could not be lighted without the other.

Perceiving that the caulker's apprentice kept his ground, the other birds'-nesters returned, step by step, and one after the other, trembling and curious. The caulker's apprentice whispered to them, "There are ghosts in the house. I have seen the nose of one." The two Torteval boys got behind their companion, standing tiptoe against his shoulder; and thus sheltered, and taking him for their shield, felt bolder and watched also.

The house on its part seemed also to be watching them. There it stood in the midst of that vast darkness and silence, with its two glaring eyes. These were its upper windows. The light vanished, reappeared, and vanished again, in the fashion of these unearthly illuminations. These sinister intermissions had, probably, some connection with the opening and shutting of the infernal regions. The air-hole of a sepulchre has thus been seen to produce effects like those from a dark lantern.

Suddenly a dark form, like that of a human being, ascended to one of the windows, as if from without, and plunged into the interior of the house.

To enter by the window is the custom with spirits.

The light was for a moment more brilliant, then went out, and appeared no more. The house became dark. The noises resembled voices. This is always the case. When there was anything to be seen it is silent. When all became invisible again, noises were heard.

There is a silence peculiar to night-time at sea. The repose of darkness is deeper on the water than on the land. When[Pg 101] there is neither wind nor wave in that wild expanse, over which, in ordinary time, even the flight of eagles makes no sound, the movement of a fly could be heard. This sepulchral quiet gave a dismal relief to the noises which issued from the house.

"Let us look," said the French boy.

And he made a step towards the house.

The others were so frightened that they resolved to follow him. They did not dare even to run away alone.

Just as they had passed a heap of fagots, which for some mysterious reason seemed to inspire them with a little courage in that solitude, a white owl flew towards them from a bush. The owls have a suspicious sort of flight, a sidelong skim which is suggestive of mischief afloat. The bird passed near the boys, fixing upon them its round eyes, bright amidst the darkness.

A shudder ran through the group behind the French boy.

He looked up at the owl and said:

“Too late, my bird; I *will* look.”

And he advanced.

The crackling sound made by his thick-nailed boots among the furze bushes did not prevent his hearing the noise in the house, which rose and fell with the continuousness and the calm accent of a dialogue.

A moment afterwards the boy added:

“Besides, it is only fools who believe in spirits.”

Insolence in the face of danger rallies the cowardly, and inspirits them to go on.

The two Torteval lads resumed their march, quickening their steps behind the caulker’s apprentice.

The haunted house seemed to them to grow larger before their eyes. This optical illusion of fear is founded in reality. The house did indeed grow larger, for they were coming nearer to it.

Meanwhile the voices in the house took a tone more and more distinct. The children listened. The ear, too, has its power of exaggerating. It was different to a murmur, more than a whispering, less than an uproar. Now and then one or two words, clearly articulated, could be caught. These words, impossible to be understood, sounded strangely. The boys stopped and listened; then went forward again.

“It’s the ghosts talking,” said the caulker’s apprentice; “but I don’t believe in ghosts.”

The Torteval boys were sorely tempted to shrink behind the heap of fagots, but they had already left it far behind; and their friend the caulker continued to advance towards the house.[Pg 102] They trembled at remaining with him; but they dared not leave him.

Step by step, and perplexed, they followed. The caulker's apprentice turned towards them and said—

"You know it isn't true. There are no such things."

The house grew taller and taller. The voices became more and more distinct.

They drew nearer.

And now they could perceive within the house something like a muffled light. It was a faint glimmer, like one of those effects produced by dark lanterns, already referred to, and which are common at the midnight meetings of witches.

When they were close to the house they halted.

One of the two Torteval boys ventured on an observation:

"It isn't spirits: it is ladies dressed in white."

"What's that hanging from the window?" asked the other.

"It looks like a rope."

"It's a snake."

"It is only a hangman's rope," said the French boy, authoritatively. "That's what they use. Only I don't believe in them."

And in three bounds, rather than steps, he found himself against the wall of the building.

The two others, trembling, imitated him, and came pressing against him, one on his right side, the other on his left. The boys applied their ears to the wall. The sounds continued.

The following was the conversation of the phantoms:—

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"Asi, entendido esta?"

"Entendido."

"Dicho?"

"Dicho."

"Aqui esperara un hombre, y podra marcharse en Inglaterra con Blasquito."

“Pagando?”

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“So that is understood?”

“Perfectly.”

“As is arranged?”

“As is arranged.”

“A man will wait here, and can accompany Blasquito to England.”

“Paying the expense?”[Pg 103]

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“Pagando.”

“Blasquito tomara al hombre en su barca.”

“Sin buscar para conocer a su pais?”

“No nos toca.”

“Ni a su nombre del hombre?”

“No se pide el nombre, pero se pesa la bolsa.”

“Bien: esperara el hombre en esa casa.”

“Tenga que comer.”

“Tendra.”

“Onde?”

“En este saco que he llevado.”

“Muy bien.”

“Puedo dexar el saco aqui?”

“Los contrabandistas no son ladrones.”

“Y vosotros, cuando marchais?”

“Mañana por la mañana. Si su hombre de usted parado podria venir con nosotros.”

“Parado no esta.”

“Hacienda suya.”

“Cuantos dias esperara alli?”

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“Paying the expense.”

“Blasquito will take the man in his bark.”

“Without seeking to know what country he belongs to?”

“That is no business of ours.”

“Without asking his name?”

“We do not ask for names; we only feel the weight of the purse.”

“Good: the man shall wait in this house.”

“He must have provisions.”

“He will be furnished with them.”

“How?”

“From this bag which I have brought.”

“Very good.”

“Can I leave this bag here?”

“Smugglers are not robbers.”

“And when do you go?”

“To-morrow morning. If your man was ready he could come with us.”

“He is not prepared.”

“That is his affair.”

“How many days will he have to wait in this house?”[Pg 104]

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“Dos, tres, quatro dias; menos o mas.”

“Es cierto que el Blasquito vendra?”

“Cierto.”

“En est Plainmont?”

“En est Plainmont.”

“A qual semana?”

“La que viene.”

“A qual dia?”

“Viernes, o sabado, o domingo.”

“No peuede faltar?”

“Es mi tocayo.”

“Por qualquiera tiempo viene?”

“Qualquiera. No tieme. Soy el Blasco, es el Blasquito.”

“Asi, no puede faltar de venir en Guernesey?”

“Vengo a un mes, y viene al otro mes.”

“Entiendo.”

“A cuentar del otro sabado, desde hoy en ocho, no se parasan cinco dias sin que venga el Blasquito.”

“Pero un muy malo mar?”

“Egurraldia gaiztoa.”

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“Two, three, or four days; more or less.”

“Is it certain that Blasquito will come?”

“Certain.”

“Here to Pleinmont?”

“To Pleinmont.”

“When?”

“Next week.”

“What day?”

“Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.”

“May he not fail?”

“He is my Tocayo.”

“Will he come in any weather?”

“At any time. He has no fear. My name is Blasco, his Blasquito.”

“So he cannot fail to come to Guernsey?”

“I come one month—he the other.”

“I understand.”

“Counting from Saturday last, one week from to-day, five days cannot elapse without bringing Blasquito.”

“But if there is much sea?”

“Bad weather?”

[Pg 105]

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“Si.”

“No vendria el Blasquito tan pronto, pero vendria.”

“Donde vendra?”

“De Vilvao.”

“Onde ira?”

“En Portland.”

“Bien.”

“O en Tor Bay.”

“Mejor.”

“Su humbre de usted puede estarse quieto.”

“No traidor sera, el Blasquito?”

“Los cobardes son traidores. Somos valientes. El mar es la iglesia del invierno. La traicion es la iglesia del infierno.”

“No se entiende a lo que dicemos?”

“Escuchar a nosotros y mirar a nosotros es imposible. La espanta hace alli el desierto.”

“Lo sè.”

“Quien se atravesaria a escuchar?”

“Es verdad.”

“Y escucharian que no entiendrian. Hablamos a una

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“Yes.”

“Blasquito will not come so quickly, but he will come.”

“Whence will he come?”

“From Bilbao.”

“Where will he be going?”

“To Portland.”

“Good.”

“Or to Torbay.”

“Better still.”

“Your man may rest easy.”

“Blasquito will betray nothing?”

“Cowards are the only traitors. We are men of courage. The sea is the church of winter. Treason is the church of hell.”

“No one hears what we say?”

“It is impossible to be seen or overheard. The people’s fear of this spot makes it deserted.”

“I know it.”

“Who is there who would dare to listen here?”

“True.”

“Besides, if they listened, none would understand. We[Pg 106]

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lengua fiera y nuestra que no se conoce. Despues que la sabeis, eries con nosotros.”

“Soy viendo para componer las haciendas con ustedes.”

“Bueno.”

“Y allora me voy.”

“Mucho.”

“Digame usted, hombre. Si el pasagero quiere que el Blasquito le lleven en unguna otra parte que Portland o Tor Bay?”

“Tenga onces.”

“El Blasquito hara lo que querra el hombre?”

“El Blasquito hace lo que quieren las onces.”

“Es menester mucho tiempo para ir en Tor Bay?”

“Como quiere el viento.”

“Ocho horas?”

“Menos, o mas.”

“El Blasquito obedecera al pasagero?”

“Si le obedece el mar al Blasquito.”

“Bien pagado sera.”

“El oro es el oro. El viento es el viento.”

“Mucho.”

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speak a wild language of our own, which nobody knows hereabouts. As you know it, you are one of us.”

“I came only to make these arrangements with you.”

“Very good.”

“I must now take my leave.”

“Be it so.”

“Tell me; suppose the passenger should wish Blasquito to take him anywhere else than to Portland or Torbay?”

“Let him bring some gold coins.”

“Will Blasquito consult the stranger’s convenience?”

“Blasquito will do whatever the gold coins command.”

“Does it take long to go to Torbay?”

“That is as it pleases the winds.”

“Eight hours?”

“More or less.”

“Will Blasquito obey the passenger?”

“If the sea will obey Blasquito.”

“He will be well rewarded.”

“Gold is gold; and the sea is the sea.”

“That is true.”[Pg 107]

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“El hombre hace lo que puede con el oro. Dios con el viento hace lo que quiere.”

“Aqui sera viernes el que desea marcharse con Blasquito.”

“Pues.”

“A qual momento llega Blasquito.”

“A la noche. A la noche se llega, a la noche se marcha. Tenemos una muger quien se llama el mar, y una quien se llama la noche.”

“La muger puede faltar, la hermana no.”

“Todo dicho esta. Abour, hombres.”

“Buenas tardes. Un golpe de aquardiente?”

“Gracias.”

“Es mejor que xarope.”

“Tengo vuestra palabra.”

“Mi nombre es Pundonor.”

“Sea usted con Dios.”

“Ereis gentleman, y soy caballero.”

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“Man with his gold does what he can. Heaven with its winds does what it will.”

“The man who is to accompany Blasquito will be here on Friday.”

“Good.”

“At what hour will Blasquito appear?”

“In the night. We arrive by night; and sail by night. We have a wife who is called the sea, and a sister called night. The wife betrays sometimes; but the sister never.”

“All is settled, then. Good-night, my men.”

“Good-night. A drop of brandy first?”

“Thank you.”

“That is better than a syrup.”

“I have your word.”

“My name is Point-of-Honour.”

“Adieu.”

“You are a gentleman: I am a caballero.”

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It was clear that only devils could talk in this way. The children did not listen long. This time they took to flight in earnest; the French boy, convinced at last, running even quicker than the others.

On the Tuesday following this Saturday, Sieur Clubin returned to St. Malo, bringing back the Durande.

The *Tamaulipas* was still at anchor in the roads.[Pg 108]

Sieur Clubin, between the whiffs of his pipe, said to the landlord of the Jean Auberge:

“Well; and when does the *Tamaulipas* get under way?”

“The day after to-morrow—Thursday,” replied the landlord.

On that evening, Clubin supped at the coast-guard officers’ table; and, contrary to his habit, went out after his supper. The consequence of his absence was, that he could not attend to the office of the Durande, and thus lost a little in the matter of freights. This fact was remarked in a man ordinarily punctual.

It appeared that he had chatted a few moments with his friend the money-changer.

He returned two hours after Noguette had sounded the Curfew bell. The Brazilian bell sounds at ten o’clock. It was therefore midnight.

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VI

THE JACRESSADE

Forty years ago, St. Malo possessed an alley known by the name of the “Ruelle Coutanchez.” This alley no longer exists, having been removed for the improvements of the town.

It was a double row of houses, leaning one towards the other, and leaving between them just room enough for a narrow rivulet, which was called the street. By stretching the legs, it was possible to walk on both sides of the stream, touching with head or elbows, as you went, the houses either on the right or the left. These old relics of mediæval Normandy have almost a human interest. Tumbledown houses and sorcerers always go together. Their leaning stories, their overhanging walls, their bowed penthouses, and their old thick-set irons, seem like lips, chin, nose, and eyebrows. The garret window is the blind eye. The walls are the wrinkled and blotchy cheeks. The opposite houses lay their foreheads together as if they were plotting some malicious deed. All those words of ancient villany—like cut-throat, “slit-weazand,” and the like—are closely connected with architecture of this kind.

One of these houses in the alley—the largest and the most famous, or notorious—was known by the name of the Jacressade.

The Jacressade was a lodging-house for people who do not lodge. In all towns, and particularly in sea-ports, there is always found beneath the lowest stratum of society a sort of residuum: vagabonds who are more than a match for justice; rovers after adventures; chemists of the swindling order, who[Pg 109] are always dropping their lives into the melting-pot; people in rags of every shape, and in every style of wearing

them; withered fruits of roguery; bankrupt existences; consciences that have filed their schedule; men who have failed in the house-breaking trade (for the great masters of burglary move in a higher sphere); workmen and workwomen in the trade of wickedness; oddities, male and female; men in coats out at elbows; scoundrels reduced to indigence; rogues who have missed the wages of roguery; men who have been hit in the social duel; harpies who have no longer any prey; petty larceners; *queux* in the double and unhappy meaning of that word. Such are the constituents of that living mass. Human nature is here reduced to something bestial. It is the refuse of the social state, heaped up in an obscure corner, where from time to time descends that dreaded broom which is known by the name of police. In St. Malo, the Jacressade was the name of this corner.

It is not in dens of this sort that we find the high-class criminals—the robbers, forgers, and other great products of ignorance and poverty. If murder is represented here, it is generally in the person of some coarse drunkard; in the matter of robbery, the company rarely rise higher than the mere sharper. The vagrant is there; but not the highwayman. It would not, however, be safe to trust this distinction. This last stage of vagabondage may have its extremes of scoundrelism. It was on an occasion, when casting their nets into the Epi-scié—which was in Paris what the Jacressade was in St. Malo—that the police captured the notorious Lacenaire.

These lurking-places refuse nobody. To fall in the social scale has a tendency to bring men to one level. Sometimes honesty in tatters found itself there. Virtue and probity have been known before now to be brought to strange passes. We must not judge always by appearances, even in the palace or at the galleys. Public respect, as well as universal reprobation, requires testing. Surprising results sometimes spring from this principle. An angel may be discovered in the stews; a pearl in the dunghill. Such sad and dazzling discoveries are not altogether unknown.

The Jacressade was rather a courtyard than a house; and more of a well than a courtyard. It had no stories looking on the street. Its façade was simply a high wall, with a low gateway. You raised the latch, pushed the gate, and were at once in the courtyard.[Pg 110]

In the midst of this yard might be perceived a round hole, encircled with a margin of stones, and even with the ground. The yard was small, the well large. A broken pavement surrounded it.

The courtyard was square, and built on three sides only. On the side of the street was only the wall; facing you as you entered the gateway stood the house, the two wings of which formed the sides to right and left.

Any one entering there after nightfall, at his own risk and peril, would have heard a confused murmur of voices; and, if there had been moonlight or starlight enough to give shape to the obscure forms before his eyes, this is what he would have seen.

The courtyard: the well. Around the courtyard, in front of the gate, a lean-to or shed, in a sort of horse-shoe form, but with square corners; a rotten gallery, with a roof of joists supported by stone pillars at unequal distances. In the centre, the well; around the well, upon a litter of straw, a kind of circular chaplet, formed of the soles of boots and shoes; some trodden down at heel, some showing the toes of the wearers, some the naked heels. The feet of men, women, and children, all asleep.

Beyond these feet, the eye might have distinguished, in the shadow of the shed, bodies, drooping heads, forms stretched out lazily, bundles of rags of both sexes, a promiscuous assemblage, a strange and revolting mass of life. The accommodation of this sleeping chamber was open to all, at the rate of two sous a week. On a stormy night the rain fell upon the feet, the whirling snow settled on the bodies of those wretched sleepers.

Who were these people? The unknown. They came there at night, and departed in the morning. Creatures of this kind form part of the social fabric. Some stole in during the darkness, and paid nothing. The greater part had scarcely eaten during the day. All kinds of vice and baseness, every sort of moral infection, every species of distress were there. The same sleep settled down upon all in this bed of filth. The dreams of all these companions in misery went on side by side. A dismal meeting-place, where misery and weakness, half-sobered debauchery, weariness from long walking to and fro, with evil thoughts, in quest of bread, pallor with closed eyelids, remorse, envy, lay mingled and festering in the same miasma, with faces that had the look of death, and dishevelled hair mixed with the filth and sweepings of the streets. Such was the putrid heap of life fermenting in this dismal spot. An unlucky turn of the wheel[Pg 111] of fortune, a ship arrived on the day before, a discharge from prison, a dark night, or some other chance, had cast them here, to find a miserable shelter. Every day brought some new accumulation of such misery. Let him enter who would, sleep who could, speak who dared; for it was a place of whispers. The new comers hastened to bury themselves in the mass, or tried to seek oblivion in sleep, since there was none in the darkness of the place. They snatched what little of themselves they could from the jaws of death. They closed their eyes in that confusion of horrors which every day renewed. They were the embodiment of misery, thrown off from society, as the scum is from the sea.

It was not every one who could even get a share of the straw. More than one figure was stretched out naked upon the flags. They lay down worn out with weariness, and awoke paralysed. The well, without lid or parapet, and thirty feet in depth, gaped open night and day. Rain fell around it; filth accumulated about, and the gutters of the yard ran down and filtered through its sides. The pail for drawing the water stood by the side. Those who were thirsty drank there; some, disgusted with life, drowned themselves in it—slipped from their slumber in the filthy shed into that profounder sleep. In the year 1819, the body of a boy, of fourteen years old, was taken up out of this well.

To be safe in this house, it was necessary to be of the "right sort." The uninitiated were regarded with suspicion.

Did these miserable wretches, then, know each other? No; yet they scented out the genuine guest of the Jacressade.

The mistress of the house was a young and rather pretty woman, wearing a cap trimmed with ribbons. She washed herself now and then with water from the well. She had a wooden leg.

At break of day, the courtyard became empty. Its inmates dispersed.

An old cock and some other fowls were kept in the courtyard, where they raked among the filth of the place all day long. A long horizontal beam, supported by posts, traversed the yard—a gibbet-shaped erection, not out of keeping with the associations of the place. Sometimes on the morrow of a rainy-day, a silk dress, mudded and wet, would be seen hanging out to dry upon this beam. It belonged to the woman with the wooden leg.

Over the shed, and like it, surrounding the yard, was a story, and above this story a loft. A rotten wooden ladder, passing[Pg 112] through a hole in the roof of the shed, conducted to this story; and up this ladder the woman would climb, sometimes staggering while its crazy rounds creaked beneath her.

The occasional lodgers, whether by the week or the night, slept in the courtyard; the regular inmates lived in the house.

Windows without a pane of glass, door-frames with no door, fireplaces without stoves; such were the chief features of the interior. You might pass from one room to the other, indifferently, by a long square aperture which had been the door, or by a triangular hole between the joists of the partitions. The fallen plaster of the ceiling lay about the floor. It was difficult to say how the old house still stood erect. The high

winds indeed shook it. The lodgers ascended as they could by the worn and slippery steps of the ladder. Everything was open to the air. The wintry atmosphere was absorbed into the house, like water into a sponge. The multitude of spiders seemed alone to guarantee the place against falling to pieces immediately. There was no sign of furniture. Two or three paillasses were in the corner, their ticking torn in parts, and showing more dust than straw within. Here and there were a water-pot and an earthen pipkin. A close, disagreeable odour haunted the rooms.

The windows looked out upon the square yard. The scene was like the interior of a scavenger's cart. The things, not to speak of the human beings, which lay rusting, mouldering, and putrefying there, were indescribable. The fragments seemed to fraternise together. Some fell from the walls, others from the living tenants of the place. The débris were sown with their tatters.

Besides the floating population which bivouacked nightly in the square yard, the Jacressade had three permanent lodgers—a charcoal man, a rag-picker, and a "gold-maker." The charcoal man and the rag-picker occupied two of the paillasses of the first story; the "gold-maker," a chemist, lodged in the loft, which was called, no one knew why, the garret. Nobody knew where the woman slept. The "gold-maker" was a poet in a small way. He inhabited a room in the roof, under the tiles—a chamber with a narrow window, and a large stone fireplace forming a gulf, in which the wind howled at will. The garret window having no frame, he had nailed across it a piece of iron sheathing, part of the wreck of a ship. This sheathing left little room for the entrance of light and much for the entrance of cold. The charcoal-man paid rent from time to time in the[Pg 113] shape of a sack of charcoal; the rag-picker paid with a bowl of grain for the fowls every week; the "gold-maker" did not pay at all. Meanwhile the latter consumed the very house itself for fuel. He had pulled down the little woodwork which remained; and every now and then he took from the wall or the roof a lath or some scantling, to heat his crucible. Upon the partition, above the rag-picker's mattress, might have been seen two columns of figures, marked in chalk by the rag-picker himself from week to week—a column of threes, and a column of fives—according as the bowl of grain had cost him three liards or five centimes. The gold-pot of the "chemist" was an old fragment of a bomb-shell, promoted by him to the dignity of a crucible, in which he mixed his ingredients. The transmutation of metals absorbed all his thoughts. He was determined before he died to revenge himself by breaking the windows of orthodox science with the real philosopher's stone. His furnace consumed a good deal of wood. The hand-rail of the stairs had disappeared. The house was slowly burning away. The landlady said to him, "You will leave us nothing but the shell." He mollified her by addressing her in verses.

Such was the Jacressade.

A boy of twelve, or, perhaps, sixteen—for he was like a dwarf, with a large wen upon his neck, and always carrying a broom in his hand—was the domestic of the place.

The habitués entered by the gateway of the courtyard; the public entered by the shop.

In the high wall, facing the street, and to the right of the entrance to the courtyard, was a square opening, serving at once as a door and a window. This was the shop. The square opening had a shutter and a frame—the only shutter in all the house which had hinges and bolts. Behind this square aperture, which was open to the street, was a little room, a compartment obtained by curtailing the sleeping shed in the courtyard. Over the door, passers-by read the inscription in charcoal, "Curiosities sold here." On three boards, forming the shop front, were several china pots without ears, a Chinese parasol made of goldbeater's skin, and ornamented with figures, torn here and there, and impossible to open or shut; fragments of iron, and shapeless pieces of old pottery, and dilapidated hats and bonnets, three or four shells, some packets of old bone and metal buttons, a tobacco-box with a portrait of Marie-Antoinette, and a dog's-eared volume of Boisbertrand's *Algebra*. Such was the stock of the shop; this assortment completed the "curiosities." The[Pg 114] shop communicated by a back door with the yard in which was the well. It was furnished with a table and a stool. The woman with a wooden leg presided at the counter.

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VII

NOCTURNAL BUYERS AND MYSTERIOUS SELLERS

Clubin had been absent from the Jean Auberge all the evening of Tuesday. On the Wednesday night he was absent again.

In the dusk of that evening, two strangers penetrated into the mazes of the Ruelle Coutanchez. They stopped in front of the Jacressade. One of them knocked at the window; the door of the shop opened, and they entered. The woman with the wooden leg met them with the smile which she reserved for respectable citizens. There was a candle on the table.

The strangers were, in fact, respectable citizens. The one who had knocked said, "Good-day, mistress. I have come for that affair."

The woman with the wooden leg smiled again, and went out by the back-door leading to the courtyard, and where the well was. A moment afterwards the back-door was

opened again, and a man stood in the doorway. He wore a cap and a blouse. It was easy to see the shape of something under his blouse. He had bits of old straw in his clothes, and looked as if he had just been aroused from sleep.

He advanced and exchanged glances with the strangers. The man in the blouse looked puzzled, but cunning; he said—

“You are the gunsmith?”

The one who had tapped at the window replied—

“Yes; you are the man from Paris?”

“Known as Redskin. Yes.”

“Show me the thing.”

The man took from under his blouse a weapon extremely rare at that period in Europe. It was a revolver.

The weapon was new and bright. The two strangers examined it. The one who seemed to know the house, and whom the man in the blouse had called “the gunsmith,” tried the mechanism. He passed the weapon to the other, who appeared less at home there, and kept his back turned to the light.

The gunsmith continued—

“How much?”[Pg 115]

The man in the blouse replied—

“I have just brought it from America. Some people bring monkeys, parrots, and other animals, as if the French people were savages. For myself I brought this. It is a useful invention.”

“How much?” inquired the gunsmith again.

“It is a pistol which turns and turns.”

“How much?”

“Bang! the first fire. Bang! the second fire. Bang! the third fire. What a hailstorm of bullets! That will do some execution.”

“The price?”

“There are six barrels.”

“Well, well, what do you want for it?”

“Six barrels; that is six Louis.”

“Will you take five?”

“Impossible. One Louis a ball. That is the price.”

“Come, let us do business together. Be reasonable.”

“I have named a fair price. Examine the weapon, Mr. Gunsmith.”

“I have examined it.”

“The barrel twists and turns like Talleyrand himself. The weapon ought to be mentioned in the *Dictionary of Weathercocks*. It is a gem.”

“I have looked at it.”

“The barrels are of Spanish make.”

“I see they are.”

“They are twisted. This is how this twisting is done. They empty into a forge the basket of a collector of old iron. They fill it full of these old scraps, with old nails, and broken horseshoes swept out of farriers’ shops.”

“And old sickle-blades.”

“I was going to say so, Mr. Gunsmith. They apply to all this rubbish a good sweating heat, and this makes a magnificent material for gun-barrels.”

“Yes; but it may have cracks, flaws, or crosses.”

“True; but they remedy the crosses by little twists, and avoid the risk of doublings by beating hard. They bring their mass of iron under the great hammer; give it two more good sweating heats. If the iron has been heated too much, they re-temper it with dull heats, and lighter hammers. And then they take out their stuff and roll it well; and with this iron they manufacture you a weapon like this.”[Pg 116]

“You are in the trade, I suppose?”

“I am of all trades.”

“The barrels are pale-coloured.”

“That’s the beauty of them, Mr. Gunsmith. The tint is obtained with antimony.”

“It is settled, then, that we give you five Louis?”

“Allow me to observe that I had the honour of saying six.”

The gunsmith lowered his voice.

“Hark you, master. Take advantage of the opportunity. Get rid of this thing. A weapon of this kind is of no use to a man like you. It will make you remarked.”

“It is very true,” said the Parisian. “It is rather conspicuous. It is more suited to a gentleman.”

“Will you take five Louis?”

“No, six; one for every shot.”

“Come, six Napoleons.”

“I will have six Louis.”

“You are not a Bonapartist, then. You prefer a Louis to a Napoleon.”

The Parisian nicknamed “Redskin” smiled.

“A Napoleon is greater,” said he, “but a Louis is worth more.”

“Six Napoleons.”

“Six Louis. It makes a difference to me of four-and-twenty francs.”

“The bargain is off in that case.”

“Good: I keep the toy.”

“Keep it.”

“Beating me down! a good idea! It shall never be said that I got rid like that of a wonderful specimen of ingenuity.”

“Good-night, then.”

“It marks a whole stage in the progress of making pistols, which the Chesapeake Indians call Nortay-u-Hah.”

“Five Louis, ready money. Why, it is a handful of gold.”

“‘Nortay-u-Hah,’ that signifies ‘short gun.’ A good many people don’t know that.”

“Will you take five Louis, and just a bit of silver?”

“I said six, master.”

The man who kept his back to the candle, and who had not yet spoken, was spending his time during the dialogue in turning and testing the mechanism of the pistol. He approached the armourer's ear and whispered—

"Is it a good weapon?"[Pg 117]

"Excellent."

"I will give the six Louis."

Five minutes afterwards, while the Parisian nicknamed "Redskin" was depositing the six Louis which he had just received in a secret slit under the breast of his blouse, the armourer and his companion carrying the revolver in his trousers pocket, stepped out into the straggling street.

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VIII

A "CANNON" OFF THE RED BALL AND THE BLACK

On the morrow, which was a Thursday, a tragic circumstance occurred at a short distance from St. Malo, near the peak of the "Décollé," a spot where the cliff is high and the sea deep.

A line of rocks in the form of the top of a lance, and connecting themselves with the land by a narrow isthmus, stretch out there into the water, ending abruptly with a large peak-shaped breaker. Nothing is commoner in the architecture of the sea. In attempting to reach the plateau of the peaked rock from the shore, it was necessary to follow an inclined plane, the ascent of which was here and there somewhat steep.

It was upon a plateau of this kind, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, that a man was standing, enveloped in a large military cape, and armed; a fact easy to be perceived from certain straight and angular folds in his mantle. The summit on which this man was resting was a rather extensive platform, dotted with large masses of rock, like enormous paving-stones, leaving between them narrow passages. This platform, on which a kind of thick, short grass grew here and there, came to an end on the sea side in an open space, leading to a perpendicular escarpment. The escarpment, rising about sixty feet above the level of the sea, seemed cut down by the aid of a plumb-line. Its left angle, however, was broken away, and formed one of those natural staircases common to granite cliffs worn by the sea, the steps of which are somewhat inconvenient, requiring sometimes the strides of a giant or the leaps of an acrobat. These stages of rock descended perpendicularly to the sea, where they were

lost. It was a break-neck place. However, in case of absolute necessity, a man might succeed in embarking there, under the very wall of the cliff.

A breeze was sweeping the sea. The man wrapped in his[Pg 118] cape and standing firm, with his left hand grasping his right shoulder, closed one eye, and applied the other to a telescope. He seemed absorbed in anxious scrutiny. He had approached the edge of the escarpment, and stood there motionless, his gaze immovably fixed on the horizon. The tide was high; the waves were beating below against the foot of the cliffs.

The object which the stranger was observing was a vessel in the offing, and which was manœuvring in a strange manner. The vessel, which had hardly left the port of St. Malo an hour, had stopped behind the Banquetiers. It had not cast anchor, perhaps because the bottom would only have permitted it to bear to leeward on the edge of the cable, and because the ship would have strained on her anchor under the cutwater. Her captain had contented himself with lying-to.

The stranger, who was a coast-guardman, as was apparent from his uniform cape, watched all the movements of the three-master, and seemed to note them mentally. The vessel was lying-to, a little off the wind, which was indicated by the backing of the small topsail, and the bellying of the main-topsail. She had squared the mizen, and set the topmast as close as possible, and in such a manner as to work the sails against each other, and to make little way either on or off shore. Her captain evidently did not care to expose his vessel much to the wind, for he had only braced up the small mizen-topsail. In this way, coming crossway on, he did not drift at the utmost more than half a league an hour.

It was still broad daylight, particularly on the open sea, and on the heights of the cliff. The shores below were becoming dark.

The coast-guardman, still engaged in his duty, and carefully scanning the offing, had not thought of observing the rocks at his side and at his feet. He turned his back towards the difficult sort of causeway which formed the communication between his resting-place and the shore. He did not, therefore, remark that something was moving in that direction. Behind a fragment of rock, among the steps of that causeway, something like the figure of a man had been concealed, according to all appearances, since the arrival of the coast-guardman. From time to time a head issued from the shadow behind the rock; looked up and watched the watcher. The head, surmounted by a wide-brimmed American hat, was that of the Quaker-looking man, who, ten days before, was talking among the stones of the Petit-Bey to Captain Zuela.[Pg 119]

Suddenly, the curiosity of the coast-guardman seemed to be still more strongly awakened. He polished the glass of his telescope quickly with his sleeve, and brought it to bear closely upon the three-master.

A little black spot seemed to detach itself from her side.

The black spot, looking like a small insect upon the water, was a boat.

The boat seemed to be making for the shore. It was manned by several sailors, who were pulling vigorously.

She pulled crosswise by little and little, and appeared to be approaching the Pointe du Décollé.

The gaze of the coast-guardman seemed to have reached its most intense point. No movement of the boat escaped it. He had approached nearer still to the verge of the rock.

At that instant a man of large stature appeared on one of the rocks behind him. It was the Quaker. The officer did not see him.

The man paused an instant, his arms at his sides, but with his fists doubled; and with the eye of a hunter, watching for his prey, he observed the back of the officer.

Four steps only separated them. He put one foot forward, then stopped; took a second step, and stopped again. He made no movement except the act of walking; all the rest of his body was motionless as a statue. His foot fell upon the tufts of grass without noise. He made a third step, and paused again. He was almost within reach of the coast-guard, who stood there still motionless with his telescope. The man brought his two closed fists to a level with his collar-bone, then struck out his arms sharply, and his two fists, as if thrown from a sling, struck the coast-guardman on the two shoulders. The shock was decisive. The coast-guardman had not the time to utter a cry. He fell head first from the height of the rock into the sea. His boots appeared in the air about the time occupied by a flash of lightning. It was like the fall of a stone in the sea, which instantly closed over him.

Two or three circles widened out upon the dark water.

Nothing remained but the telescope, which had dropped from the hands of the man, and lay upon the turf.

The Quaker leaned over the edge of the escarpment a moment, watched the circles vanishing on the water, waited a few minutes, and then rose again, singing in a low voice:

“The captain of police is dead,
Through having lost his life.”[Pg 120]

He knelt down a second time. Nothing reappeared. Only at the spot where the officer had been engulfed, he observed on the surface of the water a sort of dark spot, which became diffused with the gentle lapping of the waves. It seemed probable that the coast-guardman had fractured his skull against some rock under water, and that his blood caused the spot in the foam. The Quaker, while considering the meaning of this spot, began to sing again:

“Not very long before he died,
The luckless man was still alive.”

He did not finish his song.

He heard an extremely soft voice behind him, which said:

“Is that you, Rantaine? Good-day. You have just killed a man!”

He turned. About fifteen paces behind him, in one of the passages between the rocks, stood a little man holding a revolver in his hand.

The Quaker answered:

“As you see. Good-day, Sieur Clubin.”

The little man started.

“You know me?”

“You knew me very well,” replied Rantaine.

Meanwhile they could hear a sound of oars on the sea. It was the approach of the boat which the officer had observed.

Sieur Clubin said in a low tone, as if speaking to himself:

“It was done quickly.”

“What can I do to oblige you?” asked Rantaine.

“Oh, a trifling matter! It is very nearly ten years since I saw you. You must have been doing well. How are you?”

“Well enough,” answered Rantaine. “How are you?”

“Very well,” replied Clubin.

Rantaine advanced a step towards Clubin.

A little sharp click caught his ear. It was Sieur Clubin who was cocking his revolver.

“Rantaine, there are about fifteen paces between us. It is a nice distance. Remain where you are.”

“Very well,” said Rantaine. “What do you want with me?”

“I! Oh, I have come to have a chat with you.”

Rantaine did not offer to move again. Sieur Clubin continued:

“You assassinated a coast-guardman just now.”

Rantaine lifted the flap of his hat, and replied:[Pg 121]

“You have already done me the honour to mention it.”

“Exactly; but in terms less precise. I said a man: I say now, a coast-guardman. The man wore the number 619. He was the father of a family; leaves a wife and five children.”

“That is no doubt correct,” said Rantaine.

There was a momentary pause.

“They are picked men—those coast-guard people,” continued Clubin; “almost all old sailors.”

“I have remarked,” said Rantaine, “that people generally do leave a wife and five children.”

Sieur Clubin continued:

“Guess how much this revolver cost me?”

“It is a pretty tool,” said Rantaine.

“What do you guess it at?”

“I should guess it at a good deal.”

“It cost me one hundred and forty-four francs.”

“You must have bought that,” said Rantaine, “at the shop in the Ruelle Coutanchez.”

Clubin continued:

“He did not cry out. The fall stopped his voice, no doubt.”

“Sieur Clubin, there will be a breeze to-night.”

“I am the only one in the secret.”

“Do you still stay at the Jean Auberge?”

“Yes: you are not badly served there.”

“I remember getting some excellent sour-krout there.”

“You must be exceedingly strong, Rantaine. What shoulders you have! I should be sorry to get a tap from you. I, on the other hand, when I came into the world, looked so spare and sickly, that they despaired of rearing me.”

“They succeeded though; which was lucky.”

“Yes: I still stay at the Jean Auberge.”

“Do you know, Sieur Clubin, how I recognised you? It was from your having recognised me. I said to myself, there is nobody like Sieur Clubin for that.”

And he advanced a step.

“Stand back where you were, Rantaine.”

Rantaine fell back, and said to himself:

“A fellow becomes like a child before one of those weapons.”

Sieur Clubin continued:

“The position of affairs is this: we have on our right, in the direction of St. Enogat, at about three hundred paces from here, another coast-guardman—his number is 618—who is still alive; and on our left, in the direction of St. Lunaire—a customs[Pg 122] station. That makes seven armed men who could be here, if necessary, in five minutes. The rock would be surrounded; the way hither guarded. Impossible to elude them. There is a corpse at the foot of this rock.”

Rantaine took a side-way glance at the revolver.

“As you say, Rantaine, it is a pretty tool. Perhaps it is only loaded with powder; but what does that matter? A report would be enough to bring an armed force—and I have six barrels here.”

The measured sound of the oars became very distinct. The boat was not far off.

The tall man regarded the little man curiously. Sieur Clubin spoke in a voice more and more soft and subdued.

“Rantaine, the men in the boat which is coming, knowing what you did here just now, would lend a hand and help to arrest you. You are to pay Captain Zuela ten thousand francs for your passage. You would have made a better bargain, by the way, with the smugglers of Pleinmont; but they would only have taken you to England; and besides, you cannot risk going to Guernsey, where they have the pleasure of knowing you. To return, then, to the position of affairs—if I fire, you are arrested. You are to pay Zuela for your passage ten thousand francs. You have already paid him five thousand in advance. Zuela would keep the five thousand and be gone. These are the facts. Rantaine, you have managed your masquerading very well. That hat—that queer coat—and those gaiters make a wonderful change. You forgot the spectacles; but did right to let your whiskers grow.”

Rantaine smiled spasmodically. Clubin continued:

“Rantaine, you have on a pair of American breeches, with a double fob. In one side you keep your watch. Take care of it.”

“Thank you, Sieur Clubin.”

“In the other is a little box made of wrought iron, which opens and shuts with a spring. It is an old sailor’s tobacco-box. Take it out of your pocket, and throw it over to me.”

“Why, this is robbery.”

“You are at liberty to call the coast-guardman.”

And Clubin fixed his eye on Rantaine.

“Stay, Mess Clubin,” said Rantaine, making a slight forward movement, and holding out his open hand.

The title “Mess” was a delicate flattery.

“Stay where you are, Rantaine.”[Pg 123]

“Mess Clubin, let us come to terms. I offer you half.”

Clubin crossed his arms, still showing the barrels of his revolver.

“Rantaine, what do you take me for? I am an honest man.”

And he added after a pause:

“I must have the whole.”

Rantaine muttered between his teeth, “This fellow’s of a stern sort.”

The eye of Clubin lighted up, his voice became clear and sharp as steel. He cried:

“I see that you are labouring under a mistake. Robbery is your name, not mine. My name is Restitution. Hark you, Rantaine. Ten years ago you left Guernsey one night, taking with you the cash-box of a certain partnership concern, containing fifty thousand francs which belonged to you, but forgetting to leave behind you fifty thousand francs which were the property of another. Those fifty thousand francs, the money of your partner, the excellent and worthy Mess Lethierry, make at present, at compound interest, calculated for ten years, eighty thousand six hundred and sixty-six francs. You went into a money-changer’s yesterday. I’ll give you his name—Rébuchet, in St. Vincent Street. You counted out to him seventy-six thousand francs in French bank-notes; in exchange for which he gave you three notes of the Bank of England for one thousand pounds sterling each, plus the exchange. You put these bank-notes in the iron tobacco-box, and the iron tobacco-box into your double fob on the right-hand side. On the part of Mess Lethierry, I shall be content with that. I start to-morrow for Guernsey, and intend to hand it to him. Rantaine, the three-master lying-to out yonder is the *Tamaulipas*. You have had your luggage put aboard there with the other things belonging to the crew. You want to leave France. You have your reasons. You are going to Arequipa. The boat is coming to fetch you. You are awaiting it. It is at hand. You can hear it. It depends on me whether you go or stay. No more words. Fling me the tobacco-box.”

Rantaine dipped his hand in the fob, drew out a little box, and threw it to Clubin. It was the iron tobacco-box. It fell and rolled at Clubin’s feet.

Clubin knelt without lowering his gaze; felt about for the box with his left hand, keeping all the while his eyes and the six barrels of the revolver fixed upon Rantaine.

Then he cried:[Pg 124]

“Turn your back, my friend.”

Rantaine turned his back.

Sieur Clubin put the revolver under one arm, and touched the spring of the tobacco-box. The lid flew open.

It contained four bank-notes; three of a thousand pounds, and one of ten pounds.

He folded up the three bank-notes of a thousand pounds each, replaced them in the iron tobacco-box, shut the lid again, and put it in his pocket.

Then he picked up a stone, wrapped it in the ten-pound note, and said:

“You may turn round again.”

Rantaine turned.

Sieur Clubin continued:

“I told you I would be contented with three thousand pounds. Here, I return you ten pounds.”

And he threw to Rantaine the note enfolding the stone.

Rantaine, with a movement of his foot, sent the bank-note and the stone into the sea.

“As you please,” said Clubin. “You must be rich. I am satisfied.”

The noise of oars, which had been continually drawing nearer during the dialogue, ceased. They knew by this that the boat had arrived at the base of the cliff.

“Your vehicle waits below. You can go, Rantaine.”

Rantaine advanced towards the steps of stones, and rapidly disappeared.

Clubin moved cautiously towards the edge of the escarpment, and watched him descending.

The boat had stopped near the last stage of the rocks, at the very spot where the coast-guardman had fallen.

Still observing Rantaine stepping from stone to stone, Clubin muttered:

“A good number 619. He thought himself alone. Rantaine thought there were only two there. I alone knew that there were three.”

He perceived at his feet the telescope which had dropped from the hands of the coast-guardman.

The sound of oars was heard again. Rantaine had stepped into the boat, and the rowers had pushed out to sea.

When Rantaine was safely in the boat, and the cliff was beginning to recede from his eyes, he arose again abruptly. His features were convulsed with rage; he clenched his fist and cried:[Pg 125]

“Ha! he is the devil himself; a villain!”

A few seconds later, Clubin, from the top of the rock, while bringing his telescope to bear upon the boat, heard distinctly the following words articulated by a loud voice, and mingling with the noise of the sea:

“Sieur Clubin, you are an honest man; but you will not be offended if I write to Lethierry to acquaint him with this matter; and we have here in the boat a sailor from Guernsey, who is one of the crew of the *Tamaulipas*; his name is Ahier-Tostevin, and he will return to St. Malo on Zuela’s next voyage, to bear testimony to the fact of my having returned to you, on Mess Lethierry’s account, the sum of three thousand pounds sterling.”

It was Rantaine’s voice.

Clubin rarely did things by halves. Motionless as the coast-guardman had been, and in the exact same place, his eye still at the telescope, he did not lose sight of the boat for one moment. He saw it growing less amidst the waves; watched it disappear and reappear, and approach the vessel, which was lying-to; finally he recognised the tall figure of Rantaine on the deck of the *Tamaulipas*.

When the boat was raised, and slung again to the davits, the *Tamaulipas* was in motion once more. The land-breeze was fresh, and she spread all her sails. Clubin’s glass continued fixed upon her outline growing more and more indistinct; until half an hour later, when the *Tamaulipas* had become only a dark shape upon the horizon, growing smaller and smaller against the pale twilight in the sky.

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## IX

## USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WHO EXPECT OR FEAR THE ARRIVAL OF LETTERS FROM BEYOND SEA

On that evening, Sieur Clubin returned late.

One of the causes of his delay was, that before going to his inn, he had paid a visit to the Dinan gate of the town, a place where there were several wine-shops. In one of these wine-shops, where he was not known, he had bought a bottle of brandy, which he placed in the pocket of his overcoat, as if he desired to conceal it. Then, as the Durande was to start on the following morning, he had taken a turn aboard to satisfy himself that everything was in order.[Pg 126]

When Sieur Clubin returned to the Jean Auberge, there was no one left in the lower room except the old sea-captain, M. Gertrais-Gaboureau, who was drinking a jug of ale and smoking his pipe.

M. Gertrais-Gaboureau saluted Sieur Clubin between a whiff and a draught of ale.

“How d’ye do, Captain Clubin?”

“Good evening, Captain Gertrais.”

“Well, the *Tamaulipas* is gone.”

“Ah!” said Clubin, “I did not observe.”

Captain Gertrais-Gaboureau expectorated, and said:

“Zuela has decamped.”

“When was that?”

“This evening.”

“Where is he gone?”

“To the devil.”

“No doubt; but where is that?”

“To Arequipa.”

“I knew nothing of it,” said Clubin.

He added:

“I am going to bed.”

He lighted his candle, walked towards the door, and returned.

“Have you ever been at Arequipa, Captain?”

“Yes; some years ago.”

“Where do they touch on that voyage?”

“A little everywhere; but the *Tamaulipas* will touch nowhere.”

M. Gertrais-Gaboureau emptied his pipe upon the corner of a plate and continued:

“You know the lugger called the *Trojan Horse*, and that fine three-master, the *Trentemouzin*, which are gone to Cardiff? I was against their sailing on account of

the weather. They have returned in a fine state. The lugger was laden with turpentine; she sprang a leak, and in working the pumps they pumped up with the water all her cargo. As to the three-master, she has suffered most above water. Her cutwater, her headrail, the stock of her larboard anchor are broken. Her standing jibboom is gone clean by the cap. As for the jib-shrouds and bobstays, go and see what they look like. The mizenmast is not injured, but has had a severe shock. All the iron of the bowsprit has given way; and it is an extraordinary fact that, though the bowsprit itself is not scratched, it is completely stripped. The larboard-bow of the vessel is stove in[Pg 127] a good three feet square. This is what comes of not taking advice."

Clubin had placed the candle on the table, and had begun to readjust a row of pins which he kept in the collar of his overcoat. He continued:

"Didn't you say, Captain, that the *Tamaulipas* would not touch anywhere?"

"Yes; she goes direct to Chili."

"In that case, she can send no news of herself on the voyage."

"I beg your pardon, Captain Clubin. In the first place, she can send any letters by vessels she may meet sailing for Europe."

"That is true."

"Then there is the ocean letter-box."

"What do you mean by the ocean letter-box?"

"Don't you know what that is, Captain Clubin?"

"No."

"When you pass the straits of Magellan——"

"Well."

"Snow all round you; always bad weather; ugly down-easters, and bad seas."

"Well."

"When you have doubled Cape Monmouth——"

"Well, what next?"

"Then you double Cape Valentine."

"And then?"

“Why, then you double Cape Isidore.”

“And afterwards?”

“You double Point Anne.”

“Good. But what is it you call the ocean letter-box?”

“We are coming to that. Mountains on the right, mountains on the left. Penguins and stormy petrels all about. A terrible place. Ah! by Jove, what a howling and what cracks you get there! The hurricane wants no help. That’s the place for holding on to the sheer-rails; for reefing topsails. That’s where you take in the mainsail, and fly the jibsail; or take in the jibsail and try the stormjib. Gusts upon gusts! And then, sometimes four, five, or six days of scudding under bare poles. Often only a rag of canvas left. What a dance! Squalls enough to make a three-master skip like a flea. I saw once a cabin-boy hanging on to the jibboom of an English brig, the *True Blue*, knocked, jibboom and all, to ten thousand nothings. Fellows are swept into the air there like butterflies. I saw the second mate of the *Revenue*, a pretty schooner, knocked from[Pg 128] under the forecross-tree, and killed dead. I have had my sheer-rails smashed, and come out with all my sails in ribbons. Frigates of fifty guns make water like wicker baskets. And the damnable coast! Nothing can be imagined more dangerous. Rocks all jagged-edged. You come, by and by, to Port Famine. There it’s worse and worse. The worst seas I ever saw in my life. The devil’s own latitudes. All of a sudden you spy the words, painted in red, ‘Post Office.’”

“What do you mean, Captain Gertrais?”

“I mean, Captain Clubin, that immediately after doubling Point Anne you see, on a rock, a hundred feet high, a great post with a barrel suspended to the top. This barrel is the letter-box. The English sailors must needs go and write up there ‘Post Office.’ What had they to do with it? It is the ocean post-office. It isn’t the property of that worthy gentleman, the King of England. The box is common to all. It belongs to every flag. *Post Office!* there’s a crack-jaw word for you. It produces an effect on me as if the devil had suddenly offered me a cup of tea. I will tell you now how the postal arrangements are carried out. Every vessel which passes sends to the post a boat with despatches. A vessel coming from the Atlantic, for instance, sends there its letters for Europe; and a ship coming from the Pacific, its letters for New Zealand or California. The officer in command of the boat puts his packet into the barrel, and takes away any packet he finds there. You take charge of these letters, and the ship which comes after you takes charge of yours. As ships are always going to and fro, the continent whence you come is that to which I am going. I carry your letters; you carry mine. The barrel is

made fast to the post with a chain. And it rains, snows and hails! A pretty sea. The imps of Satan fly about on every side. The *Tamaulipas* will pass there. The barrel has a good lid with a hinge, but no padlock. You see, a fellow can write to his friends this way. The letters come safely."

"It is very curious," muttered Clubin thoughtfully.

Captain Gertrais-Gaboureau returned to his bottle of ale.

"If that vagabond Zuela should write (continued Clubin aside), the scoundrel puts his scrawl into the barrel at Magellan, and in four months I have his letter."

"Well, Captain Clubin, do you start to-morrow?"

Clubin, absorbed in a sort of somnambulism, did not notice the question; and Captain Gertrais repeated it.

Clubin woke up.[Pg 129]

"Of course, Captain Gertrais. It is my day. I must start to-morrow morning."

"If it was my case, I shouldn't, Captain Clubin. The hair of the dog's coat feels damp. For two nights past, the sea-birds have been flying wildly round the lanthorn of the lighthouse. A bad sign. I have a storm-glass, too, which gives me a warning. The moon is at her second quarter; it is the maximum of humidity. I noticed to-day some pimpernels with their leaves shut, and a field of clover with its stalks all stiff. The worms come out of the ground to-day; the flies sting; the bees keep close to their hives; the sparrows chatter together. You can hear the sound of bells from far off. I heard to-night the Angelus at St. Lunaire. And then the sun set angry. There will be a good fog to-morrow, mark my words. I don't advise you to put to sea. I dread the fog a good deal more than a hurricane. It's a nasty neighbour that."[Pg 130]

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## BOOK VI

## THE DRUNKEN STEERSMAN AND THE SOBER CAPTAIN

### I

### THE DOUVRES

At about five leagues out, in the open sea, to the south of Guernsey, opposite Pleinmont Point, and between the Channel Islands and St. Malo, there is a group of rocks, called the Douvres. The spot is dangerous.

This term Douvres, applied to rocks and cliffs, is very common. There is, for example, near the *Côtes du Nord*, a Douvre, on which a lighthouse is now being constructed, a dangerous reef; but one which must not be confounded with the rock above referred to.

The nearest point on the French coast to the Douvres is Cape Bréhat. The Douvres are a little further from the coast of France than from the nearest of the Channel Islands. The distance from Jersey may be pretty nearly measured by the extreme length of Jersey. If the island of Jersey could be turned round upon Corbière, as upon a hinge, St. Catherine's Point would almost touch the Douvres, at a distance of more than four leagues.

In these civilised regions the wildest rocks are rarely desert places. Smugglers are met with at Hagot, custom-house men at Binic, Celts at Bréhat, oyster-dredgers at Cancale, rabbit-shooters at Césambre or Cæsar's Island, crab-gatherers at Brecqhou, trawlers at the Minquiers, dredgers at Ecréhou, but no one is ever seen upon the Douvres.

The sea birds alone make their home there.

No spot in the ocean is more dreaded. The Casquets, where it is said the *Blanche Nef* was lost; the Bank of Calvados; the Needles in the Isle of Wight; the Ronesse, which makes the coast of Beaulieu so dangerous; the sunken reefs at Préel, which block the entrance to Merquel, and which necessitates the red-painted beacon in twenty fathoms of water, the[Pg 131] treacherous approaches to Etables and Plouha; the two granite Druids to the south of Guernsey, the Old Anderlo and the Little Anderlo, the Corbière, the Hanways, the Isle of Ras, associated with terror in the proverb:

"*Si jamais tu passes le Ras*,
*Si tu ne meurs, tu trembleras*."

the Mortes-Femmes, the Déroute between Guernsey and Jersey, the Hardent between the Minquiers and Chousey, the Mauvais Cheval between Bouley Bay and Barneville, have not so evil a reputation. It would be preferable to have to encounter all these dangers, one after the other, than the Douvres once.

In all that perilous sea of the Channel, which is the Egean of the West, the Douvres have no equal in their terrors, except the Paternoster between Guernsey and Sark.

From the Paternoster, however, it is possible to give a signal—a ship in distress there may obtain succour. To the north rises Dicard or D'Icare Point, and to the south Grosnez. From the Douvres you can see nothing.

Its associations are the storm, the cloud, the wild sea, the desolate waste, the uninhabited coast. The blocks of granite are hideous and enormous—everywhere perpendicular wall—the severe inhospitality of the abyss.

It is in the open sea; the water about is very deep. A rock completely isolated like the Douvres attracts and shelters creatures which shun the haunts of men. It is a sort of vast submarine cave of fossil coral branches—a drowned labyrinth. There, at a depth to which divers would find it difficult to descend, are caverns, haunts, and dusky mazes, where monstrous creatures multiply and destroy each other. Huge crabs devour fish and are devoured in their turn. Hideous shapes of living things, not created to be seen by human eyes, wander in this twilight. Vague forms of antennæ, tentacles, fins, open jaws, scales, and claws, float about there, quivering, growing larger, or decomposing and perishing in the gloom, while horrible swarms of swimming things prowl about seeking their prey.

To gaze into the depths of the sea is, in the imagination, like beholding the vast unknown, and from its most terrible point of view. The submarine gulf is analogous to the realm of night and dreams. There also is sleep, unconsciousness, or at least apparent unconsciousness, of creation. There, in the awful silence and darkness, the rude first forms of life, phantom-like, demoniacal, pursue their horrible instincts.

Forty years ago, two rocks of singular form signalled the[Pg 132] Douvres from afar to passers on the ocean. They were two vertical points, sharp and curved—their summits almost touching each other. They looked like the two tusks of an elephant rising out of the sea; but they were tusks, high as tall towers, of an elephant huge as a mountain. These two natural towers, rising out of the obscure home of marine monsters, only left a narrow passage between them, where the waves rushed through. This passage, tortuous and full of angles, resembled a straggling street between high walls. The two twin rocks are called the Douvres. There was the Great Douvre and the Little Douvre; one was sixty feet high, the other forty. The ebb and flow of the tide had at last worn away part of the base of the towers, and a violent equinoctial gale on the 26th of October, 1859, overthrew one of them. The smaller one, which still remains, is worn and tottering.

One of the most singular of the Douvres is a rock known as "The Man." This still exists. Some fisherman in the last century visiting this spot found on the height of the rock a human body. By its side were a number of empty sea-shells. A sailor escaped from

shipwreck had found a refuge there; had lived some time upon rock limpets, and had died. Hence its name of “The Man.”

The solitudes of the sea are peculiarly dismal. The things which pass there seem to have no relation to the human race; their objects are unknown. Such is the isolation of the Douvres. All around, as far as eye can reach, spreads the vast and restless sea.

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II

AN UNEXPECTED FLASK OF BRANDY

On the Friday morning, the day after the departure of the *Tamaulipas*, the Durande started again for Guernsey.

She left St. Malo at nine o’clock. The weather was fine; no haze. Old Captain Gertrais-Gaboureau was evidently in his dotage.

Sieur Clubin’s numerous occupations had decidedly been unfavourable to the collection of freight for the Durande. He had only taken aboard some packages of Parisian articles for the fancy shops of St. Peter’s Port; three cases for the Guernsey hospital, one containing yellow soap and long candles, and the other French shoe leather for soles, and choice Cordovan[Pg 133] skins. He brought back from his last cargo a case of crushed sugar and three chests of congou tea, which the French custom-house would not permit to pass. He had embarked very few cattle; some bullocks only. These bullocks were in the hold loosely tethered.

There were six passengers aboard; a Guernsey man, two inhabitants of St. Malo, dealers in cattle: a “tourist,”—a phrase already in vogue at this period—a Parisian citizen, probably travelling on commercial affairs, and an American, engaged in distributing Bibles.

Without reckoning Clubin, the crew of the Durande amounted to seven men; a helmsman, a stoker, a ship’s carpenter, and a cook—serving as sailors in case of need—two engineers, and a cabin boy. One of the two engineers was also a practical mechanic. This man, a bold and intelligent Dutch negro, who had originally escaped from the sugar plantations of Surinam, was named Imbrancam. The negro, Imbrancam, understood and attended admirably to the engine. In the early days of the “Devil Boat,” his black face, appearing now and then at the top of the engine-room stairs, had contributed not a little to sustain its diabolical reputation.

The helmsman, a native of Guernsey, but of a family originally from Cotentin, bore the name of Tangrouille. The Tangrouilles were an old noble family.

This was strictly true. The Channel Islands are like England, an aristocratic region. Castes exist there still. The castes have their peculiar ideas, which are, in fact, their protection. These notions of caste are everywhere similar; in Hindostan, as in Germany, nobility is won by the sword; lost by soiling the hands with labour: but preserved by idleness. To do nothing, is to live nobly; whoever abstains from work is honoured. A trade is fatal. In France, in old times, there was no exception to this rule, except in the case of glass manufacturers. Emptying bottles being then one of the glories of gentlemen, making them was probably, for that reason, not considered dishonourable. In the Channel archipelago, as in Great Britain, he who would remain noble must contrive to be rich. A working man cannot possibly be a gentleman. If he has ever been one, he is so no longer. Yonder sailor, perhaps, descends from the Knights Bannerets, but is nothing but a sailor. Thirty years ago, a real Gorges, who would have had rights over the Seigniory of Gorges, confiscated by Philip Augustus, gathered seaweed, naked-footed, in the sea. A Carteret is a waggoner[Pg 134] in Sark. There are at Jersey a draper, and at Guernsey a shoemaker, named Gruchy, who claim to be Grouchys, and cousins of the Marshal of Waterloo. The old registers of the Bishopric of Coutances make mention of a Seigniory of Tangroville, evidently from Tancarville on the lower Seine, which is identical with Montmorency. In the fifteenth century, Johan de Héroudeville, archer and *étoffe* of the Sire de Tangroville, bore behind him "*son corset et ses autres harnois*." In May, 1371, at Pontorson, at the review of Bertrand du Guesclin, Monsieur de Tangroville rendered his homage as Knight Bachelor. In the Norman islands, if a noble falls into poverty, he is soon eliminated from the order. A mere change of pronunciation is enough. Tangroville becomes Tangrouille: and the thing is done.

This had been the fate of the helmsman of the Durande.

At the Bordagé of St. Peter's Port, there is a dealer in old iron named Ingrouille, who is probably an Ingroville. Under Lewis le Gros the Ingrovilles possessed three parishes in the district of Valognes. A certain Abbé Trigan has written an Ecclesiastical History of Normandy. This chronicler Trigan was the curé of the Seigniory of Digoville. The Sire of Digoville, if he had sunk to a lower grade, would have been called Digouille.

Tangrouille, this probable Tancarville, and possible Montmorency, had an ancient noble quality, but a grave failing for a steersman; he got drunk occasionally.

Sieur Clubin had obstinately determined to retain him. He answered for his conduct to Mess Lethierry.

Tangrouille the helmsman never left the vessel; he slept aboard.

On the eve of their departure, when Sieur Clubin came at a late hour to inspect the vessel, the steersman was in his hammock asleep.

In the night Tangrouille awoke. It was his nightly habit. Every drunkard who is not his own master has his secret hiding-place. Tangrouille had his, which he called his store. The secret store of Tangrouille was in the hold. He had placed it there to put others off the scent. He thought it certain that his hiding-place was known only to himself. Captain Clubin, being a sober man himself, was strict. The little rum or gin which the helmsman could conceal from the vigilant eyes of the captain, he kept in reserve in this mysterious corner of the hold, and nearly every night he had a stolen interview with the[Pg 135] contents of this store. The surveillance was rigorous, the orgie was a poor one, and Tangrouille's nightly excesses were generally confined to two or three furtive draughts. Sometimes it happened that the store was empty. This night Tangrouille had found there an unexpected bottle of brandy. His joy was great; but his astonishment greater. From what cloud had it fallen? He could not remember when or how he had ever brought it into the ship. He soon, however, consumed the whole of it; partly from motives of prudence, and partly from a fear that the brandy might be discovered and seized. The bottle he threw overboard. In the morning, when he took the helm, Tangrouille exhibited a slight oscillation of the body.

He steered, however, pretty nearly as usual.

With regard to Clubin, he had gone, as the reader knows, to sleep at the Jean Auberge.

Clubin always wore, under his shirt, a leathern travelling belt, in which he kept a reserve of twenty guineas; he took this belt off only at night. Inside the belt was his name "Clubin," written by himself on the rough leather, with thick lithographer's ink, which is indelible.

On rising, just before his departure, he put into this girdle the iron box containing the seventy-five thousand francs in bank-notes; then, as he was accustomed to do, he buckled the belt round his body.