VICTOR HUGO

NINETY-THREE

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PART I. AT SEA.

BOOK I. THE FOREST OF LA SAUDRAIE.

During the last days of May, 1793, one of the Parisian battalions introduced into Brittany by Santerre was reconnoitring the formidable La Saudraie Woods in Astillé. Decimated by this cruel war, the battalion was reduced to about three hundred men. This was at the time when, after Argonne, Jemmapes, and Valmy, of the first battalion of Paris, which had numbered six hundred volunteers, only twenty-seven men remained, thirty-three of the second, and fifty-seven of the third,—a time of epic combats. The battalion sent from Paris into La Vendée numbered nine hundred and twelve men. Each regiment had three pieces of cannon. They had been quickly mustered. On the 25th of April, Gohier being Minister of Justice, and Bouchotte Minister of War, the section of Bon Conseil had offered to send volunteer battalions into La Vendée; the report was made by Lubin, a member of the Commune. On the 1st of May, Santerre was ready to send off twelve thousand men, thirty field-pieces, and one battalion of gunners. These battalions, notwithstanding they were so quickly formed, serve as models even at the present day, and regiments of the line are formed on the same plan; they altered the former proportion between the number of soldiers and that of non-commissioned officers.

On the 28th of April the Paris Commune had given to the volunteers of Santerre the following order: "No mercy, no quarter." Of the twelve thousand that had left Paris, at the end of May eight thousand were dead. The battalion which was engaged in La Saudraie held itself on its guard. There was no hurrying: every man looked at once to right and to left, before him, behind him. Kléber has said: "The soldier has an eye in his back." They had been marching a long time. What o'clock could it be? What time of the day was it?

It would have been hard to say; for there is always a sort of dusk in these wild thickets, and it was never light in that wood. The forest of La Saudraie was a tragic one. It was in this coppice that from the month of November, 1792, civil war began its crimes; Mousqueton, the fierce cripple, had come forth from those fatal thickets; the number of murders that had been committed there made one's hair stand on end. No spot was more terrible.

The soldiers forced cautiously. Everything was in full bloom; they were surrounded by a quivering wall of branches, whose leaves diffused a delicious freshness. Here and there sunbeams pierced, these green shades. At their feet the gladiolus, the German iris, the wild narcissus, the wood-daisy, that tiny flower, forerunner of the warm weather, the spring crocus,—all these embroidered and adorned a thick carpet of vegetation, abounding in every variety of moss, from the kind that looks like a caterpillar to that resembling a star.

The soldiers advanced silently, step by step, gently pushing aide the underbrush. The birds twittered above the bayonets.

La Saudraie was one of those thickets where formerly, in time of peace, they had pursued the Houicheba,—the the hunting of birds by night; now it was a place for hunting men.

The coppice consisted entirely of birch-trees, beeches, and oaks; the ground was level; the moss and the thick grass deadened the noise of footsteps; no paths at all, or paths no sooner found than lost; holly, wild sloe, brakes, hedges of rest-harrow, and tall brambles; it was impossible to see a man ten paces distant.

Now and then a heron or a moor-hen flew through the branches, showing the vicinity of a swamp. They marched along at haphazard, uneasy, and fearing lest they might find what they sought.

From time to time they encountered traces of encampments,—a burnt place, trampled grass, sticks

arranged in the form of a cross, or branches spattered with blood. Here, soup had been made; there, Mass had been said; yonder, wounds had been dressed. But whoever had passed that way had vanished. Where were they? Far away, perhaps; and yet they might be very near, hiding, blunderbuss in hand. The wood seemed deserted. The battalion redoubled its precaution. Solitude, therefore distrust. No one was to be seen; all the more reason to fear some one. They had to do with a forest of ill-repute.

An ambush was probable.

Thirty grenadiers, detached as scouts and commanded by a sergeant, marched ahead, at a considerable distance from the main body. The vivandière of the battalion accompanied them. The vivandières like to join the vanguard; they run risks, but then they stand a chance of seeing something. Curiosity is one of the forms of feminine courage.

Suddenly the soldiers of this little advanced guard received that shock familiar to hunters, which shows them that they are close upon the lair of their prey. They heard something like breathing in the middle of the thicket, and it seemed as if they caught sight of some commotion among the leaves. The soldiers made signs to each other.

When this mode of watching and reconnoitring is confided to the scouts, officers have no need to interfere; what has to be done is done instinctively.

In less than a minute the spot where the movement had been observed was surrounded by a circle of levelled muskets, aimed simultaneously from every side at the dusky centre of the thicket; and the soldiers, with finger on trigger and eye on the suspected spot, awaited only the sergeant's command to fire.

Meanwhile, the vivandière ventured to peer through the underbush; and just as the sergeant was about to cry, "Fire!" this woman cried, "Halt!"

And turning to the soldiers, "Do not fire!" she cried, and rushed into the thicket, followed by the men.

There was indeed some one there.

In the thickest part of the copse on the edge of one of those small circular clearings made in the woods by the charcoal-furnaces that are used to burn the roots of trees, in a sort of hole formed by the branches,—a bower of foliage, so to speak, half-open, like an alcove,—sat a woman on the moss, with a nursing child at her breast and the fair heads of two sleeping children resting against her knees.

This was the ambush.

"What are you doing here?" called out the vivandière.

The woman raised her head, and the former added angrily,—

"Are you insane to remain there!"

She went on,—

"A little more, and you would have been blown to atoms!" Then addressing the soldiers, she said, "It's a woman."

"Pardieu! That's plain to be seen," replied a grenadier.

The vivandière continued,—"To come into the woods to get oneself massacred. Can you conceive of any one so stupid as that?"

The woman, surprised, bewildered, and stunned, was gazing around, as though in a dream, at these muskets, sabres, bayonets, and savage faces. The two children awoke and began to cry.

"I am hungry," said one.

"I am afraid," said the other.

The baby went on nursing.

The vivandière addressed it.

"You are the wise one," she said.

The mother was dumb with terror.

"Don't be afraid," exclaimed the sergeant, "we are the battalion of the Bonnet Rouge."

The woman trembled from head to foot. She looked at the sergeant, of whose rough face she could see only the eyebrows, moustache, and eyes like two coals of fire.

"The battalion formerly known as the Red-Cross," added the vivandière.

The sergeant continued,—

"Who are you, madam?"

The woman looked at him in terror. She was thin, young, pale, and in tatters. She wore the large hood and woollen cloak of the Breton peasants, fastened by a string around her neck. She left her bosom exposed with the indifference of an animal. Her feet, without shoes or stockings, were bleeding.

"It's a beggar," said the sergeant.

The vivandière continued in her martial yet womanly voice,—a gentle voice withal,—

"What is your name?"

The woman stammered in a scarce audible whisper:

"Michelle Fléchard."

Meanwhile the vivandière stroked the little head of the nursing baby with her large hand.

"How old is this midget?" she asked.

The mother did not understand. The vivandière repeated, —"I ask you how old it is?"

"Oh, eighteen months," said the mother.

"That's quite old," said the vivandière; "it ought not to nurse any longer, you must wean it. We will give him soup."

The mother began to feel more at ease. The two little ones, who had awakened, were rather interested than frightened; they admired the plumes of the soldiers.

"Ah, they are very hungry!" said the mother.

And she added,—

"I have no more milk."

"We will give them food," cried the sergeant, "and you also. But there is something more to be settled. What are your political opinions?"

The woman looked at him and made no reply.

"Do you understand my question?"

She stammered,—

"I was put into a convent when I was quite young, but I married; I am not a nun. The Sisters taught me to speak French. The village was set on fire. We escaped in such haste that I had no time to put my shoes on."

"I ask you what are your political opinions?"

"I don't know anything about that."

The sergeant continued,—

"There are female spies. That kind of person we shoot. Come, speak. You are not a gypsy, are you? What is your native land?"

She still looked at him as though unable to comprehend.

The sergeant repeated,—

"What is your native land?"

"I do not know," she said.

"How is that? You do not know your country?"

"Ah! Do you mean my country? I know that."

"Well, what is your country?"

The woman replied,—

"It is the farm of Siscoignard, in the parish of Azé."

It was the sergeant's turn to be surprised. He paused for a moment, lost in thought; then he went on,—

"What was it you said?"

"Siscoignard."

"You cannot call that your native land."

"That is my country."

Then after a minute's consideration she added,—

"I understand you, sir. You are from France, but I am from Brittany."

"Well?"

"It is not the same country."

"But it is the same native land," exclaimed the sergeant.

The woman only replied,—

"I am from Siscoignard."

"Let it be. Siscoignard, then," said the sergeant. "Your family belong there, I suppose?"

"Yes!"

"What is their business?"

"They are all dead. I have no one left."

The sergeant, who was quite loquacious, continued to question her.

"Devil take it, every one has relations, or one has had them! Who are you? Speak!"

The woman listened bewildered; this "or one has had them" sounded more like the cry of a wild beast than the speech of a human being.

The vivandière felt obliged to interfere. She began to caress the nursing child, and patted the other two on the cheeks.

"What is the baby's name? It's a little girl, isn't it?"

The mother replied, "Georgette."

"And the oldest one? For he is a man, the rogue!"

"René-Jean."

"And the younger one? For he is a man too, and a chubby one into the bargain."

"Gros-Alain," replied the mother.

"They are pretty children," said the vivandière. "They look already as if they were somebody."

Meanwhile the sergeant persisted.

"Come! Speak, madam! Have you a house?"

"I had one once."

"Where was it?"

"At Azé."

"Why are you not at home?"

"Because my house was burned."

"Who burned it?"

"I do not know. There was a battle."

"Were do you come from?"

"From over there."

"Where are you going?"

"I do not know."

"Come, to the point! Who are you?"

"I do not know."

"Don't know who you are?"

"We are people running away."

"To what party do you belong?"

"I do not know."

"To the Blues, or the Whites? Which side are you on?"

"I am with my children."

There was a pause. The vivandière spoke.

"For my part I never had any children. I have not had time."

The sergeant began again.

"But what about your parents? See here, madam, tell me the facts about your parents. Now, my name is Radoub. I am a sergeant. I live on the Rue Cherche-Midi. My father and my mother lived there. I can talk of my parents. Tell us about yours. Tell us who your parents were."

"Their name was Fléchard. That's all."

"Yes. The Fléchards are the Fléchards, just as the Radoubs are the Radoubs. But people have a trade. What was your parents' trade? What did they do, these Fléchards of yours?"[1]

"They were laborers. My father was feeble and could not work, on account of a beating which the lord, his lord, our lord, gave him: it was really a mercy, for my father had poached a rabbit, a crime of which the penalty is death; but the lord was merciful and said, 'You may give him only a hundred blows with a stick;' and my father was left a cripple."

"And then?"

"My grandfather was a Huguenot. The curé had him sent to the galleys. I was very young then."

"And then?"

"My husband's father was a salt smuggler. The king had him hung."

"And what did your husband do?"

"He used to fight in those times."

"For whom?"

"For the king."

"And after that?"

"Ah! For his lord."

"And then?"

"For the curé."

"By all the names of beasts!" cried the grenadier. The woman jumped in terror.

"You see, madam, we are Parisians," said the vivandière, affably.

The woman clasped her hands, exclaiming,—

"Oh, my God and Lord Jesus!"

"No superstitions here!" rejoined the sergeant.

The vivandière sat down beside the woman and drew the oldest child between her knees; he yielded readily. Children are quite as easily reassured as they are frightened, with no apparent reason. They seem to possess instinctive perceptions. "My poor worthy woman of this neighborhood, you have pretty little children, at all events. One can guess their age. The big one is four years, and his brother is three. Just see how greedily the little rascal sucks. The wretch! Stop eating up your mother! Come madam, do not be frightened. You ought to join the battalion. You should do as I do. My name is Housarde. It's a nickname, but I had rather be called Housarde than Mamzelle Bicorneau, like my mother. I am the canteen woman, which is the same as saying, she who gives the men to drink when they are firing grape-shot and killing each other. The devil and all his train. Our feet are about the same size. I will give you a pair of my shoes. I was in Paris on the 10th of August. I gave Westerman a drink. Everything went with a rush in those days! I saw Louis XVI. guillotined,—Louis Capet, as they call him. I tell you he didn't like it. You just listen now. To think that on the 13th of January he was roasting chestnuts and enjoying himself with his family! When he was made to lie down on what is called the see-saw, he wore neither coat nor shoes; only a shirt, a quilted waistcoat, gray cloth breeches, and gray silk stockings. I saw all that with my own eyes. The fiacre which he rode in was painted green. Now then, you come with us; they are kind lads in the battalion; you will be canteen number two; I will teach you the trade. Oh, it's very simple! You will have a can and a bell; you are right in the racket, amid the firing

of the platoons and the cannons, in all that hubbub, calling out, 'Who wants a drink, my children?' It is no harder task than that. I offer a drink to all, you may take my word for it, —to the Whites as well as to the Blues, although I am a Blue, and a true Blue at that. But I serve them all alike. Wounded men are thirsty. People die without difference of opinions. Dying men ought to shake hands. How foolish to fight! Come with us. If I am killed you will fill my place. You see I am not much to look at, but I am a kind woman, and a good fellow. Don't be afraid."

When the vivandière ceased speaking, the woman muttered to herself,—

"Our neighbor's name was Marie-Jeanne, and it was our servant who was Marie-Claude."

Meanwhile Sergeant Radoub was reprimanding the grenadier.

"Silence! You frighten madam. A man should not swear before ladies."

"I say this is a downright butchery for an honest man to hear about," replied the grenadier; "and to see Chinese Iroquois, whose father-in-law was crippled by the lord, whose grandfather was sent to the galleys by the curé, and whose father was hung by the king, and who fight,—zounds!—and who get entangled in revolts, and are crushed for the sake of the lord, the curé, and the king!"

"Silence in the ranks!" exclaimed the sergeant.

"One may be silent, sergeant," continued the grenadier; "but it is all the same provoking to see a pretty woman like that running the risk of getting her neck broken for the sake of a calotin."[2]

"Grenadier," said the sergeant, "we are not in the Pike Club. Save your eloquence!" And turning to the woman, "And your husband, madam? What does he do? What has become of him?"

"Nothing; since he was killed."

"Where was that?"

"In the hedge."

"When?"
"Three days ago."
"Who killed him?"
"I do not know."
"How is that? You don't know who killed your husband?"
"No."
"Was it a Blue, or a White?"
"It was a bullet."
"Was that three days ago?"
"Yes."
"In what direction?"
"Towards Ernée. My husband fell. That was all."
"And since your husband died, what have you been doing?"
"I have been taking my little ones along."
"Where are you taking them?"
"Straight along."
"Where do you sleep?"
"On the ground."
"What do you eat?"
"Nothing."
The sergeant made that military grimace which elevates the moustache to the nose. "Nothing?"
"Well, nothing but sloes, blackberries when I found any left over from last year, whortle-berries, and fern-shoots."
"Yes, you may well call it nothing."
The oldest child, who seemed to understand, said:
"I am hungry."
The sergeant pulled from his pocket a piece of ration bread, and handed it to the mother.
Taking the bread, she broke, it in two and gave it to the children, who bit into it greedily.
"She has not saved any for herself," growled the sergeant.
"Because she is not hungry," remarked a soldier.
"Because she is a mother," said the sergeant.
The children broke in.
"Give me something to drink," said one.

"To drink," repeated the other.

"Is there no brook in this cursed wood?" said the sergeant.

The vivandière took the copper goblet suspended at her belt together with a bell, turned the cock of the can that was strapped across her shoulder, and pouring several drops into the goblet, held it to the children's lips.

The first drank and made a grimace.

The second drank and spit it out

"It is good, all the same," said the vivandière.

"Is that some of the old cut-throat?" asked the sergeant.

"Yes, some of the best. But they are peasants."

She wiped the goblet.

"And so, madam, you are running away?" resumed the sergeant.

"I couldn't help it."

"Across the fields? With no particular object?"

"Sometimes I run with all my might, and then I walk, and once in a while I fall."

"Poor countrywoman!" said the vivandière.

"They were fighting," stammered the woman. "I was in the middle of the firing. I don't know what they want. They killed my husband,—that was all I know about it."

The sergeant banged the butt of his musket on the ground, exclaiming,—

"What a beast of a war! In the name of all that is idiotic!"

The woman continued,—-

"Last night we went to bed in an *émousse.*"

"All four of you?"

"All four."

"Went to bed?"

"Went to bed."

"Then you must have gone to bed standing." And he turned to the soldiers.

"Comrades, a dead tree, old and hollow, wherein a man can sheathe himself like a sword in a scabbard, is what

these savages call an *émousse.* But what would you have? All are not obliged to be Parisians."

"The idea of sleeping in the hollow of a tree,—and with three children!" exclaimed the vivandière.

"And when the little one bawled, it must have seemed queer to the passers-by, who could see nothing, to hear the tree calling out, 'Papa! mamma!'"

"Fortunately, it is summer-time," said the woman, with a sigh.

She looked down resigned, with an expression in her eyes of one who had known surprising calamities.

The silent soldiers surrounded this wretched group. A widow, three orphans, flight, desolation, solitude, the rumblings of war on the horizon, hunger, thirst, no food but herbs, no roof but the sky.

The sergeant drew near the woman and gazed upon the nursing infant. The baby left the breast, turned her head, and looked with her lovely blue eyes on the dreadful hairy face, bristling and fierce, that was bending over her, and began to smile.

The sergeant drew back, and a large tear was seen to roll down his cheek, clinging to the end of his moustache like a pearl.

He raised his voice.

"Comrades, I have come to the conclusion that this battalion is about to become a father. Are you willing? We adopt these three children."

"Hurrah for the Republic!" shouted the grenadiers.

"So be it!" exclaimed the sergeant; and he stretched out both hands over the mother and the children.

"Behold the children of the battalion of the Bonnet-Rouge!" he said.

The vivandière jumped for joy.

"Three heads under one cap!" she cried.

Then she burst out sobbing, and embraced the widow excitedly, saying,—

"She looks like a rogue already, that little girl!"

"Hurrah for the Republic!" repeated the soldiers.

"Come, citizeness," said the sergeant to the mother.

[1] The sergeant makes a pun on the name Fléchard which is untranslatable. Flèche means arrow, and he asks whether the Fléchards made arrows.—TR.

[2] An opprobrious epithet for an ecclesiastic.—TR.

BOOK II. THE CORVETTE "CLAYMORE."

I. ENGLAND AND FRANCE UNITED.

In the spring of 1793, when France, attacked at one and the same time on all her frontiers, experienced the pathetic diversion of the downfall of the Girondists, the following events were taking place in the Channel Islands. In Jersey, one evening on the first of June, about an hour before sunset, from the lovely little Bay of Bonnenuit, a corvette set sail in that foggy kind of weather dangerous for navigation, and for that very reason better suited for escape than for pursuit. The ship, although it was manned by a French crew, belonged to the English squadron which had been stationed to watch the eastern point of the island. The prince of Tour d'Auvergne, of the house of Bouillon, commanded the English fleet, and it was by his order, and for a special and pressing service, that the corvette had been detached.

This corvette entered at the Trinity House under the name of the "Claymore," and, apparently a freight vessel, was in point of fact a man-of-war. She looked like a heavy and peaceable merchant-ship; but it would not have been wise to trust to that, for she had been built to serve two purposes,—cunning and strength; to deceive if possible, to fight if necessary. For the service on hand that night the freight between decks had been replaced by thirty carronades of heavy caliber. Either for the sake of giving the ship a peaceable appearance, or possibly because a storm was anticipated, these thirty carronades were housed; that is, they were firmly fastened inside by triple chains, with their muzzles tightly braced against the port-holes. Nothing could be seen from the outside. The port-

holes were closed. It was as though the corvette wore a mask. These guns were mounted on old-fashioned bronzed wheels, called the "radiating model." The regular naval corvettes carry their guns on the upper deck; but this ship, built for surprise and ambush, had its decks clear, having been arranged, as we have just seen, to carry a masked battery between decks. The "Claymore," although built in a heavy and clumsy fashion, was nevertheless a good sailer, her hull being one of the strongest in the English Navy; and in an engagement she was almost equal to a frigate, although her mizzen-mast was only a small one, with a fore and aft rig. Her rudder, of an odd and scientific shape, had a curved frame, quite unique, which had cost fifty pounds sterling in the Southampton shipyards. The crew, entirely French, was composed of refugee officers and sailors who were deserters. They were experienced men; there was not one among them who was not a good sailor, a good soldier, and a good royalist. A threefold fanaticism possessed them, —for the ship, the sword, and the king.

Half a battalion of marines, which could in case of necessity be disembarked, was added to the crew.

The captain of the "Claymore" was a chevalier of Saint-Louis, Count Boisberthelot, one of the best officers of the old Royal Navy; the first officer was the Chevalier de la Vieuville, who had commanded in the French Guards the company of which Hoche was sergeant; and the pilot, Philip Gacquoil, was one of the most experienced in Jersey.

It was easy to guess that the ship had some unusual work to do. In fact, a man had just stepped on board, who had the look of one starting out for an adventure. He was an old man, tall, upright, and strong, with a severe countenance,— a man whose age it would have been difficult to determine, for he seemed both young and old, advanced in years yet abounding in vigor; one of those men whose eyes flash lightning though the hair is white. Judging from his energy, he was about forty years old; his air of authority was that of a man of eighty.

At the moment when he stepped on board the corvette, his sea-cloak was half-open, revealing beneath wide breeches called *bragoubras*, high boots, and a goat-skin waistcoat embroidered with silk on the right side, while the rough and bristling fur was left on the wrong side,—the complete costume of a Breton peasant. These old-fashioned Breton waist-coats answered two purposes, being worn both on holidays and week-days, and could be reversed at the option of the wearer, with either the hairy or the smooth side out,—fur on a week-day, and gala attire for holidays. And as if to increase a carefully studied resemblance, the peasant dress worn by the old man was well worn on the knees and elbows, showing signs of long usage, and his cloak, made of coarse cloth, looked like the garb of a fisherman. He wore the round hat of the period, tall and broad-brimmed, which when turned down looks countrified, but when caught up on one side by a loop and a cockade has quite a military effect. He wore it turned down, country fashion, with neither loop nor cockade.

Lord Balcarras, the governor of the island, and the Prince de La Tour d'Auvergne had in person escorted him on board. The secret agent of the Prince Gélambre, an old body-guard of the Count d'Artois, himself a nobleman, had personally superintended the arrangement of his cabin, showing his attention and courtesy even so far as to carry the old man's valise. When about to leave him, to return to the land, M. de Gélambre had made a deep bow to this peasant; Lord Balcarras exclaimed, "Good luck to you, general;" and the Prince de La Tour d'Auvergne said, "Au revoir, cousin."

"The peasant" was the name by which the sailors at once called their passenger in the short dialogues which sailors hold among themselves; yet, without further information on the subject, they understood that this peasant was no more a genuine peasant than the man-of-war was a merchantman.

There was scarcely any wind. The "Claymore" left Bonnenuit, passed Boulay Bay, remaining for some time in sight, tacking, gradually diminishing in the gathering darkness, and finally disappeared.

All hour later, Gélambre, having returned home to Saint-Hélier, sent to the Count d'Artois, at the headquarters of the Duke of York, by the Southampton express, the following lines:—

"MY LORD,—The departure has just taken place. Success is certain. In eight days the whole coast, from Granville to St. Malo, will be ablaze."

Four days previously the representative of the Marne, Prieur, on a mission to the army on the coast of Cherbourg, and just then stopping at Granville, received by a secret emissary the following message, in the same handwriting as the previous one:—

"CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVE,—The 1st of June, at high tide, the war corvette 'Claymore,' with a masked battery, will set sail, to land on the coast of France a man who answers to the following description: Tall, aged, gray-haired, dressed like a peasant, and with the hands of an aristocrat. To-morrow I will send you further details. He will land on the morning of the 2d. Communicate this to the cruiser, capture the corvette, guillotine the man."

II. NIGHT WITH THE SHIP AND THE PASSENGER.

The corvette, instead of sailing south, in the direction of St. Catherine, headed to the north, then, veering towards the west, had boldly entered that arm of the sea between Sark and Jersey called the Passage of the Déroute. There was then no lighthouse, at any point on either coast. It had been a clear sunset: the night was darker than summer nights usually are; it was moonlight, but large clouds, rather of the equinox than of the solstice, overspread the

sky, and, judging by appearances the moon would not be visible until she reached the horizon at the moment of setting. A few clouds hung low near the surface of the sea and covered it with vapor.

All this darkness was favorable. Gacquoil, the pilot, intended to leave Jersey on the left, Guernsey on the right, and by boldly sailing between Hanois and Dover, to reach some bay on the coast near St. Malo, a longer but safer route than the one through Minquiers; for the French coaster had standing orders to keep an unusually sharp lookout between St. Hélier and Granville.

If the wind were favorable, and nothing happened, by dint of setting all sail Gacquoil hoped to reach the coast of France at daybreak.

All went well. The corvette had just passed Gros Nez. Towards nine o'clock the weather looked sullen, as the sailors express it, both wind and sea rising; but the wind was favorable, and the sea was rough, yet not heavy, waves now and then dashing over the bow of the corvette. "The peasant," whom Lord Balcarras had called general, and whom the Prince de La Tour d'Auvergne had addressed as cousin, was a good sailor, and paced the deck of the corvette with calm dignity. He did not seem to notice that she rocked considerably. From time to time he took out of his waistcoat pocket a cake of chocolate, and breaking off a piece, munched it. Though his hair was gray, his teeth were sound.

He spoke to no one, except that from time to time he made a few concise remarks in an undertone to the captain, who listened to him deferentially, apparently regarding his passenger as the commander, rather than himself. Unobserved in the fog, and skilfully piloted, the "Claymore" coasted along the steep shore to the north of Jersey, hugging the land to avoid the formidable reef of Pierres-de-Leeq, which lies in the middle of the strait between Jersey and Sark. Gacquoil, at the helm, sighting in turn Grove de Leeq, Gros Nez, and Plémont, making the corvette glide in

among those chains of reefs, felt his way along to a certain extent, but with the self-confidence of one familiar with the ways of the sea.

The corvette had no light forward, fearing to betray its passage through these guarded waters. They congratulated themselves on the fog. The Grande Étape was reached; the mist was so dense that the lofty outlines of the Pinnacle were scarcely visible. They heard it strike ten from the belfry of Saint-Ouen,—a sign that the wind was still aft. All was going well; the sea grew rougher, because they were drawing near La Corbière.

A little after ten, the Count Boisberthelot and the Chevalier de la Vieuville escorted the man in the peasant garb to the door of his cabin, which was the captain's own room. As he was about to enter, he remarked, lowering his voice:—

"You understand the importance of keeping the secret, gentlemen. Silence up to the moment of explosion. You are the only ones here who know my name."

"We will carry it to the grave," replied Boisberthelot.

"And for my part, I would not reveal it were I face to face with death," remarked the old man.

And he entered his state-room.

III. PATRICIAN AND PLEBEIAN UNITED.

The commander and the first officer returned on deck, and began to pace up and down side by side, talking as they walked. The theme was evidently their passenger; and this was the substance of the conversation which the wind wafted through the darkness. Boisberthelot grumbled half audibly to La Vieuville,—

"It remains to be seen whether or no he is a leader."

La Vieuville replied,—

"Meanwhile he is a prince."

"Almost."

"A nobleman in France, but a prince in Brittany."

"Like the Trémoilles and the Rohans."

"With whom he is connected."

Boisberthelot resumed,—

"In France and in the carriages of the king he is a marquis,—as I am a count, and you a chevalier."

"The carriages are far away!" exclaimed Vieuville. "We are living in the time of the tumbril."

A silence ensued.

Boisberthelot went on,—

"For lack of a French prince we take one from Brittany."

"For lack of thrushes—No: since an eagle is not to be found, we take a crow."

"I should prefer a vulture," remarked Boisberthelot.

La Vieuville replied,—-

"Yes, indeed, with a beak and talons."

"We shall see."

"Yes," replied Vieuville, "it is time there was a leader. I agree with Tinténiac,—a leader and gun-power! See here, commander, I know nearly all the possible and impossible leaders,—those of yesterday, those of to-day, and those of to-morrow. Not one of them has the head required for war. In this cursed Vendée a general is needed who would be a lawyer as well as a leader. He must harass the enemy, dispute every bush, ditch, and stone; he must force unlucky quarrels upon him, and take advantage of everything; vigilant and pitiless, he must watch incessantly, slaughter freely, and make examples. Now, in this army of peasants there are heroes, but no captains. D'Elbée is a nonentity, Lescure an invalid; Bonchamps is merciful,—he is kind, and that implies folly; La Rochejaquelein is a superb sub-lieutenant; Silz is an officer good for the open field, but not suited for a war that needs a man of expedients; Cathelineau is a simple teamster; Stofflet is a crafty game-keeper; Bérard is inefficient; Boulainvilliers is absurd; Charette is horrible. I make no mention of Gaston the

barber. Mordemonbleu! what is the use of opposing revolution, and what is the difference between ourselves and the republicans, if we set barbers over the heads of noblemen! The fact is, that this beastly revolution has contaminated all of us."

"It is the itch of France."

"It is the itch of the Tiers État," rejoined Boisberthelot. "England alone can help us."

"And she will, captain, undoubtedly."

"Meanwhile it is an ugly state of affairs."

"Yes,—rustics everywhere. A monarchy that has Stofflet, the game-keeper of M. de Maulevrier, for a commander has no reason to envy a republic whose minister is Pache, the son of the Duke de Castries' porter. What men this Vendean war brings face to face,—.on one side Santerre the brewer; on the other Gaston the hairdresser!"

"My dear La Vieuville, I feel some respect for this Gaston. He behaved well in his command of Guéménée. He had three hundred Blues neatly shot after making them dig their own graves."

"Well enough done; but I could have done quite as well as he."

"Pardieu, to be sure; and I too."

"The great feats of war," said Vieuville, "require noble blood in those who perform them. These are matters for knights, and not for hairdressers."

"But yet there are estimable men in this 'Third Estate,'" rejoined Vieuville. "Take that watchmaker, Joly, for instance. He was formerly a sergeant in a Flanders regiment; he becomes a Vendean chief and commander of a coast band. He has a son, a republican; and while the father serves in the ranks of the Whites, the son serves in those of the Blues. An encounter, a battle: the father captures the son and blows out his brains."

"He did well," said La Vieuville.

"A royalist Brutus," answered Boisberthelot. "Nevertheless, it is unendurable to be under the command

of a Coquereau, a Jean-Jean, a Moulin, a Focart, a Bouju, a Chouppes!"

"My dear chevalier, the opposite party is quite as indignant. We are crowded with plebeians; they have an excess of nobles. Do you think the sans-culottes like to be commanded by the Count de Canclaux, the Viscount de Miranda, the Viscount de Beauharnais, the Count de Valence, the Marquis de Custine, and the Duke de Biron?"

"What a combination!"

"And the Duke de Chartres!"

"Son of Égalité. By the way, when will he be king?"

"Never!"

"He aspires to the throne, and his very crimes serve to promote his interests."

"And his vices will injure his cause," said Boisberthelot.

Then, after another pause, he continued,—

"Nevertheless, he was anxious to be reconciled. He came to see the king. I was at Versailles when some one spit on his back."

"From the top of the grand staircase?"

"Yes."

"I am glad of it."

"We called him Bourbon le Bourbeux."

"He is bald-headed; he has pimples; he is a regicide. Poh!"

And La Vieuville added:—

"I was with him at Ouessant."

"On the 'Saint Esprit'?"

"Yes."

"Had he obeyed Admiral d'Orvillier's signal to keep to the windward, he would have prevented the English from passing."

"True."

"Was he really hidden in the bottom of the hold?"

"No; but we must say so all the same."

And La Vieuville burst out laughing.

Boisberthelot continued:—

"Fools are plentiful. Look here, I have known this Boulainvilliers of whom you were speaking; I knew him well. At first the peasants were armed with pikes; would you believe it, he took it into his head to form them into pike-men. He wanted to drill them in crossing pikes and repelling a charge. He dreamed of transforming these barbarians into regular soldiers. He undertook to teach them how to round in the corners of their squares, and to mass battalions with hollow squares. He jabbered the antiquated military dialect to them; he called the chief of a squad a 'cap d'escade'—which was what corporals under Louis XIV. were called. He persisted in forming a regiment of all those poachers. He had regular companies whose sergeants ranged themselves in a circle every evening, and, receiving the sign and countersign from the colonel's sergeant, repeated it in a whisper to the lieutenant's sergeant, who repeated it to his next neighbor, who in his turn transmitted it to the next man, and so on from ear to ear until it reached the last man. He cashiered an officer for not standing bareheaded to receive the watchword from the sergeant. You may imagine how he succeeded. This simpleton could not understand that peasants have to be led peasant fashion, and that it is impossible to transform rustics into soldiers. Yes, I have known Boulainvilliers."

They walked along a few steps, each one engrossed in his own thoughts.

Then the conversation was resumed:—

"By the way, has the report of Dampierre's death been confirmed?"

"Yes, commander."

"Before Condé?"

"At the camp of Pamars; he was hit by a cannon-ball."

Boisberthelot sighed.

"Count Dampierre,—another of our men, who took sides with them."

"May he prosper wherever he may be!" said Vieuville.

"And the ladies,—where are they?"