Chapter 34

THE DIPLOMACY OF GEORGES CADOUDAL

The feeling that Roland experienced as he followed Georges Cadoudal resembled that of a man half-awakened, who is still under the influence of a dream, and returns gradually from the confines which separate night from day. He strives to discover whether the ground he walks on is that of fiction or reality, and the more he burrows in the dimness of his brain the further he buries himself in doubt.

A man existed for whom Roland felt a worship almost divine. Accustomed to live in the atmosphere of glory which surrounded that man, to see others obey his orders, and to obey them himself with a promptness and abnegation that were almost Oriental, it seemed amazing to him to encounter, at the opposite ends of France, two organized powers, enemies of the power of that man, and prepared to struggle against it. Suppose a Jew of Judas Maccabeus, a worshipper of Jehovah, having, from his infancy, heard him called the King of kings, the God of strength, of vengeance, of armies, the Eternal, coming suddenly face to face with the mysterious Osiris of the Egyptians, or the thundering Jupiter of the Greeks.

His adventures at Avignon and Bourg with Morgan and the Company of Jehu, his adventures in the villages of Muzillac and the Trinité with Cadoudal and his Chouans, seemed to him some strange initiation in an unknown religion; but like those courageous neophytes who risk death to learn the secrets of initiation, he resolved to follow to the end.

Besides he was not without a certain admiration for these exceptional characters; nor did he measure without a certain amazement these revolted Titans, challenging his god; he felt they were in no sense common men--neither those who had stabbed Sir John in the Chartreuse of Seillon, nor those who had shot the bishop of Vannes at the village of the Trinité.

And now, what was he to see? He was soon to know, for they had ridden five hours and a half and the day was breaking.

Beyond the village of Tridon they turned across country; leaving Vannes to the left, they reached Trépléon. At Trépléon, Cadoudal, still followed by his major-general, Branche-d'Or, had found Monte-à-l'assaut and Chante-en-hiver. He gave them further orders, and continued on his way, bearing to the left and skirting the edges of a little wood which lies between Grandchamp and Larré. There Cadoudal halted, imitated, three separate times in succession, the cry of an owl, and was presently surrounded by his three hundred men.

A grayish light was spreading through the sky beyond Trépléon and Saint-Nolf; it was not the rising of the sun, but the first rays of dawn. A heavy mist rose from the earth and prevented the eye from seeing more than fifty feet beyond it.

Cadoudal seemed to be expecting news before risking himself further.

Suddenly, about five hundred paces distant, the crowing of a cock was heard. Cadoudal pricked up his ears; his men looked at each other and laughed.

The cock crowed again, but nearer.

"It is he," said Cadoudal; "answer him."

The howling of a dog came from within three feet of Roland, but so perfectly imitated that the young man, although aware of what it was, looked about him for the animal that was uttering such lugubrious plaints. Almost at the same moment he saw a man coming rapidly through the mist, his form growing more and more distinct as he approached. The new-comer saw the two horsemen, and went toward them.

Cadoudal rode forward a few paces, putting his finger to his lips, as if to request the man to speak low. The latter, therefore, did not pause until he was close beside his general.

"Well, Fleur-d'épine," asked Georges, "have we got them?"

"Like a mouse in a trap; not one can re-enter Vannes, if you say the word."

"I desire nothing better. How many are there?"

"One hundred men, commanded by the general himself."

"How many wagons?"

"Seventeen."

"When did they start?"

"They must be about a mile and three-quarters from here."

"What road have they taken?"

"Grandchamp to Vannes."

"So that, if I deploy from Meucon to Plescop--"

"You'll bar the way."

"That's all."

Cadoudal called his four lieutenants, Chante-en-hiver, Monte-à-l'assaut, Fend-l'air, and La Giberne, to him, gave each of them fifty men, and each with his men disappeared like shadows in the heavy mist, giving the well-known hoot, as they vanished. Cadoudal was left with a hundred men, Branche-d'Or and Fleur-d'épine. He returned to Roland.

"Well, general," said the latter, "is everything satisfactory?"

"Yes, colonel, fairly so," replied the Chouan; "but you can judge for yourself in half an hour."

"It will be difficult to judge of anything in that mist."

Cadoudal looked about him.

"It will lift in half an hour," said he. "Will you utilize the time by eating a mouthful and drinking a glass?"

"Faith!" said the young man, "I must admit that the ride has hollowed me."

"I make a point," said Georges, "of eating the best breakfast I can before fighting."

"Then you are going to fight?"

"I think so."

"Against whom?"

"Why, the Republicans, and as we have to do with General Hatry, I doubt if he surrenders without resistance."

"Do the Republicans know they are going to fight you?"

"They haven't the least idea."

"So it is to be a surprise?"

"Not exactly, inasmuch as when the fog lifts they will see us as soon as we see them." Then, turning to the man who seemed to be in charge of the provisions, Cadoudal added, "Brise-Bleu, is there anything for breakfast?"

Brise-Bleu nodded affirmatively, went into the wood, and came out dragging after him a donkey loaded with two baskets. He spread a cloak on a rise of the ground, and placed on it a roast chicken, a bit of cold salt pork, some bread and buckwheat cakes. This time Brise-Bleu had provided luxury in the shape of a bottle of wine and a glass.

Cadoudal motioned Roland to the table and the improvised repast. The young man sprang from his horse, throwing the bridle to a Chouan. Cadoudal did likewise.

"Now," said the latter, turning to his men, "you have half an hour to do as we do. Those who have not breakfasted in half an hour are notified that they must fight on empty stomachs."

The invitation seemed equivalent to an order, so promptly and precisely was it executed. Every man pulled from his bag or his pocket a bit of bread or a buckwheat cake, and followed the example of his general, who had already divided the chicken between Roland and himself. As there was but one glass, both officers shared it.

While they were thus breakfasting, side by side, like two friends on a hunt, the sun rose, and, as Cadoudal had predicted, the mist became less and less dense. Soon the nearest trees could be distinguished; then the line of the woods, stretching to the right from Meucon to Grand-champ, while to the left the plain of Plescop, threaded by a rivulet, sloped gradually toward Vannes. This natural declivity of the ground became more and more perceptible as it neared the ocean.

On the road from Grandchamp to Plescop, a line of wagons were now visible, the tail of which was still hidden in the woods. This line was motionless; evidently some unforeseen obstacle had stopped it.

In fact, about a quarter of a mile before the leading wagon they perceived the two hundred Chouans, under Monte-à-l'assaut, Chante-en-hiver, Fend-l'air, and Giberne, barring the way.

The Republicans, inferior in number--we said that there were but a hundred--had halted and were awaiting the complete dispersion of the fog to determine the number and character of the men they were about to meet. Men and wagons were now in a triangle, of which Cadoudal and his hundred men formed one of the angles.

At sight of this small number of men thus surrounded by triple forces, and of the well-known uniform, of which the color had given its name to the Republican forces, Roland sprang hastily to his feet. As for Cadoudal, he remained where he was, nonchalantly finishing his meal. Of the hundred men surrounding the general, not one seemed to perceive the spectacle that was now before their eyes; it seemed almost as if they were waiting for Cadoudal's order to look at it.

Roland had only to cast his eyes on the Republicans to see that they were lost. Cadoudal watched the various emotions that succeeded each other on the young man's face.

"Well," asked the Chouan, after a moment's silence, "do you think my dispositions well taken?"

"You might better say your precautions, general," replied Roland, with a sarcastic smile.

"Isn't it the First Consul's way to make the most of his advantages when he gets them?" asked Cadoudal.

Roland bit his lips; then, instead of replying to the royalist leader's question, he said: "General, I have a favor to ask which I hope you will not refuse."

"What is it?"

"Permission to let me go and be killed with my comrades."

Cadoudal rose. "I expected that request," he said.

"Then you will grant it?" cried Roland, his eyes sparkling with joy.

"Yes; but, first, I have a favor to ask of you," said the royalist leader, with supreme dignity.

"Ask it, sir."

"To bear my flag of truce to General Hatry."

"For what purpose?"

"I have several proposals to make to him before the fight begins."

"I presume that among those proposals which you deign to intrust to me you do not include that of laying down his arms?"

"On the contrary, colonel, you understand that that is the first of my proposals."

"General Hatry will refuse it."

"That is probable."

"And then?"

"Then I shall give him his choice between two others, either of which he can, I think, accept without forfeiting his honor."

"What are they?"

"I will tell you in due time. Begin with the first."

"State it."

"General Hatry and his hundred men are surrounded by a triple force. I offer them their lives; but they must lay down their arms, and make oath not to serve again in the Vendée for five years."

Roland shook his head.

"Better that than to see his men annihilated."

"Maybe so; but he would prefer to have his men annihilated, and be annihilated with them."

"Don't you think," asked Cadoudal, laughing, "that it might be as well, in any case, to ask him?"

"True," said Roland.

"Well, colonel, be so good as to mount your horse, make yourself known to him, and deliver my proposal."

"Very well," replied Roland.

"The colonel's horse," said Cadoudal, motioning to the Chouan who was watching it. The man led it up. The young man sprang upon it, and rapidly covered the distance which separated him from the convoy.

A group of men were gathered on its flank, evidently composed of General Hatry and his officers. Roland rode toward them, scarcely three gunshots distant from the Chouans. General Hatry's astonishment was great when he

saw an officer in the Republican uniform approaching him. He left the group and advanced three paces to meet the messenger.

Roland made himself known, related how he came to be among the Whites, and transmitted Cadoudal's proposal to General Hatry.

As he has foreseen, the latter refused it. Roland returned to Cadoudal with a proud and joyful heart. "He refuses!" he cried, as soon as his voice could be heard.

Cadoudal gave a nod that showed he was not surprised by the refusal.

"Then, in that case," he answered, "go back with my second proposition. I don't wish to have anything to reproach myself with in answering to such a judge of honor as you."

Roland bowed. "What is the second proposition?"

"General Hatry shall meet me in the space that separates the two troops, he shall carry the same arms as I--that is, his sabre and pistols--and the matter shall be decided between us. If I kill him, his men are to submit to the conditions already named, for we cannot take prisoners; if he kills me his men shall pass free and be allowed to reach Vannes safely. Come, I hope that's a proposition you would accept, colonel?"

"I would accept it myself," replied Roland.

"Yes," exclaimed Cadoudal, "but you are not General Hatry. Content yourself with being a negotiator this time, and if this proposition, which, if I were he, I wouldn't let escape me, does not please him, come to me. I'm a good fellow, and I'll make him a third."

Roland rode off a second time; his coming was awaited by the Republicans with visible impatience. He transmitted the message to General Hatry.

"Citizen," replied the general, "I must render account of my conduct to the First Consul. You are his aide-de-camp, and I charge you on your return to Paris to bear testimony on my behalf to him. What would you do in my place? Whatever you would do, that I shall do."

Roland started; his face assumed the grave expression of a man who is arguing a point of honor in his own mind. Then, at the end of a few seconds, he said: "General, I should refuse."

"Your reasons, citizen?" demanded the general.

"The chances of a duel are problematic; you cannot subject the fate of a hundred brave men to a doubtful chance. In an affair like this, where all are concerned, every man had better defend his own skin as best he can."

"Is that your opinion, colonel?"

"On my honor."

"It is also mine; carry my reply to the royalist general."

Roland galloped back to Cadoudal, and delivered General Hatry's reply.

Cadoudal smiled. "I expected it," he said.

"You couldn't have expected it, because it was I who advised him to make it."

"You thought differently a few moments ago."

"Yes; but you yourself reminded me that I was not General Hatry. Come, what is your third proposition?" said Roland impatiently; for he began to perceive, or rather he had perceived from the beginning, that the noble part in the affair belonged to the royalist general.

"My third proposition," said Cadoudal, "is not a proposition but an order; an order for two hundred of my men to withdraw. General Hatry has one hundred men; I will keep one hundred. My Breton forefathers were accustomed to fight foot to foot, breast to breast, man to man, and oftener one to three than three to one. If General Hatry is victorious, he can walk over our bodies and tranquilly enter Vannes; if he is defeated, he cannot say it is by numbers. Go, Monsieur de Montrevel, and remain with your friends. I give them thus the advantage of numbers, for you alone are worth ten men."

Roland raised his hat.

"What are you doing, sir?" demanded Cadoudal.

"I always bow to that which is grand, general; I bow to you."

"Come, colonel," said Cadoudal, "a last glass of wine; let each of us drink to what we love best, to that which we grieve to leave behind, to that we hope to meet in heaven."

Taking the bottle and the one glass, he filled it half full, and offered it to Roland. "We have but one glass, Monsieur de Montrevel; drink first."

"Why first?"

"Because, in the first place, you are my guest, and also because there is a proverb that whoever drinks after another knows his thought." Then, he added, laughing: "I want to know your thought, Monsieur de Montrevel."

Roland emptied the glass and returned it to Cadoudal. The latter filled his glass half full, as he bad done for Roland, and emptied it in turn.

"Well," asked Roland, "now do you know my thought, general?"

"My thought," said Roland, with his usual frankness, "is that you are a brave man, general. I shall feel honored if, at this moment when we are going to fight against each other, you will give me your hand."

The two young men clasped hands, more like friends parting for a long absence than two enemies about to meet on the battlefield. There was a simple grandeur, full of majesty, in this action. Each raised his hat.

"Good luck!" said Roland to Cadoudal; "but allow me to doubt it. I must even confess that it is from my lips, not my heart."

"God keep you, sir," said Cadoudal, "and I hope that my wish will be realized. It is the honest expression of my thoughts."

"What is to be the signal that you are ready?" inquired Roland.

"A musket shot fired in the air, to which you will reply in the same way."

"Very good, general," replied Roland. And putting his horse to a gallop, he crossed the space between the royalist general and the Republican general for the third time.

"Friends," said Cadoudal, pointing to Roland, "do you see that young man?"

All eyes were bent upon Roland. "Yes," came from every mouth.

"He came with a safe-guard from our brothers in the Midi; his life is sacred to you; he may be captured, but it must be living--not a hair of his head must be touched."

"Very good, general," replied the Chouans.

"And now, my friends, remember that you are the sons of those thirty Bretons who fought the thirty British between Ploermel and Josselin, ten leagues from here, and conquered them." Then, in a low voice, he added with a sigh, "Unhappily we have not to do with the British this time."

The fog had now lifted completely, and, as usually happens, a few rays of the wintry sun tinged the plain of Plescop with a yellow light.

It was easy therefore to distinguish the movements of the two troops. While Roland was returning to the Republicans, Branche-d'Or galloped toward the two hundred men who were blocking the way. He had hardly spoken to Cadoudal's four lieutenants before a hundred men were seen to wheel to the right and a hundred more to wheel to the left and march in opposite directions, one toward Plumergat, the other toward Saint-Ave, leaving the road open. Each body halted three-quarters of a mile down the road, grounded arms and remained motionless. Branche-d'Or returned to Cadoudal.

"Have you any special orders to give me, general?" he asked.

"Yes, one," answered Cadoudal, "take eight men and follow me. When you see the young Republican, with whom I breakfasted, fall under his horse, fling yourself upon him, you and your eight men, before he has time to free himself, and take him prisoner."

"Yes, general."

"You know that I must have him safe and sound."

"That's understood, general"

"Choose your eight men. Monsieur de Montrevel once captured, and his parole given, you can do as you like."

"Suppose he won't give his parole?"

"Then you must surround him so that he can't escape, and watch him till the fight is over."

"Very well," said Branche-d'Or, heaving a sigh; "but it'll be a little hard to stand by with folded arms while the others are having their fun."

"Pooh! who knows?" said Cadoudal; "there'll probably be enough for every body."

Then, casting a glance over the plain and seeing his own men stationed apart, and the Republicans massed for battle, he cried: "A musket!"

They brought one. Cadoudal raised it above his head and fired in the air. Almost at the same moment, a shot fired in the same manner from the midst of the Republicans answered like an echo to that of Cadoudal.

Two drums beating the advance and a bugle were heard. Cadoudal rose in his stirrups.

"Children," he cried, "have you all said your morning prayers?"

"Yes, yes!" answered almost every voice. "If any of you forgot them, or did not have time, let them pray now."

Five or six peasants knelt down and prayed.

The drums and bugle drew nearer.

"General, general," cried several voices impatiently, "they are coming."

The general motioned to the kneeling peasants.

"True," replied the impatient ones.

Those who prayed rose one by one, according as their prayers had been long or short. By the time they were all afoot, the Republicans had crossed nearly one-third of the distance. They marched, bayonets fixed, in three ranks, each rank three abreast.

Roland rode at the head of the first rank, General Hatry between the first and second. Both were easily recognized, being the only men on horseback. Among the Chouans, Cadoudal was the only rider, Branche-d'Or having dismounted to take command of the eight men who were to follow Georges.

"General," said a voice, "the prayer is ended, and every one is standing."

Cadoudal looked around him to make sure it was true; then he cried in a loud voice: "Forward! Enjoy yourselves, my lads!"

This permission, which to Vendéans and Chouans, was equivalent to sounding a charge, was scarcely given before the Chouans spread over the fields to cries of "Vive le roi!" waving their hats with one hand and their guns with the other.

Instead of keeping in rank like the Republicans, they scattered like sharpshooters, forming an immense crescent, of which Georges and his horse were the centre.

A moment later the Republicans were flanked and the firing began. Cadoudal's men were nearly all poachers, that is to say, excellent marksmen, armed with English carbines, able to carry twice the length of the army musket. Though the first shots fired might have seemed wide of range, these messengers of death nevertheless brought down several men in the Republican ranks.

"Forward!" cried the general.

The soldiers marched on, bayonets fixed; but in a few moments there was no enemy before them. Cadoudal's hundred men had turned skirmishers; they had separated, and fifty men were harassing both of the enemy's flanks.

General Hatry ordered his men to wheel to the right and left. Then came the order: "Fire!"

Two volleys followed with the precision and unanimity of well disciplined troops; but they were almost without result, for the Republicans were firing upon scattered men. Not so with the Chouans, who fired on a mass; with them every shot told.

Roland saw the disadvantage of the position. He looked around and, amid the smoke, distinguished Cadoudal, erect and motionless as an equestrian statue. He understood that the royalist leader was waiting for him.

With a cry he spurred his horse toward him. As if to save him part of the way, Cadoudal put his horse to a gallop. But a hundred feet from Cadoudal he drew rein. "Attention!" he said to Branche-d'Or and his companions.

"Don't be alarmed, general; here we are," said Branche-d'Or.

Cadoudal drew a pistol from his holster and cocked it. Roland, sabre in hand, was charging, crouched on his horse's neck. When they were twenty paces apart, Cadoudal slowly raised his hand in Roland's direction. At ten paces he fired.

The horse Roland was riding had a white star on its forehead. The ball struck the centre of that star, and the horse, mortally wounded, rolled over with its rider at Cadoudal's feet.

Cadoudal put spurs to his own horse and jumped both horse and rider.

Branche-d'Or and his men were ready. They sprang, like a pack of jaguars, upon Roland, entangled under the body of his horse. The young man dropped his sword and tried to seize his pistols, but before he could lay

hand upon the holsters two men had him by the arms, while the four others dragged his horse from between his legs. The thing was done with such unanimity that it was easy to see the manoeuvre had been planned.

Roland roared with rage. Branche-d'Or came up to him and put his hat in his hand.

"I do not surrender!" shouted Roland.

"Useless to do so, Monsieur de Montrevel," replied Branche-d'Or with the utmost politeness.

"What do you mean?" demanded Roland, exhausting his strength in a struggle as desperate as it was useless.

"Because you are captured, sir."

It was so true that there could be no answer.

"Then kill me!" cried Roland.

"We don't want to kill you, sir," replied Branche-d'Or.

"Then what do you want?"

"Give us your parole not to fight any more, and you are free."

"Never!" exclaimed Roland.

"Excuse me, Monsieur de Montrevel," said Branche-d'Or, "but that is not loyal!"

"What!" shrieked Roland, in a fury, "not loyal! You insult me, villain, because you know I can't defend myself or punish you."

"I am not a villain, and I didn't insult you, Monsieur de Montrevel; but I do say that by not giving your word, you deprive the general of nine men, who might be useful to him and who are obliged to stay here to guard you. That's not the way the Big Round Head acted toward you. He had two hundred men more than you, and he sent them away. Now we are only eighty-nine against one hundred."

A flame crossed Roland's face; then almost as suddenly he turned pale as death.

"You are right, Branche-d'Or," he replied. "Succor or no succor, I surrender. You and your men can go and fight with your comrades."

The Chouans gave a cry of joy, let go their hold of Roland, and rushed toward the Republicans, brandishing their hats and muskets, and shouting: "Vive le roi!"

Roland, freed from their grip, but disarmed physically by his fall, morally by his parole, went to the little eminence, still covered by the cloak which had served as a tablecloth for their breakfast, and sat down. From there he could see the whole combat; not a detail was lost upon him.

Cadoudal sat erect upon his horse amid fire and smoke, like the Demon of War, invulnerable and implacable.

Here and there the bodies of a dozen or more Chouans lay stretched upon the sod. But it was evident that the Republicans, still massed together, had lost double that number. Wounded men dragged themselves across the open space, meeting, rearing their bodies like mangled snakes, to fight, the Republicans with their bayonets, and the Chouans with their knives. Those of the wounded Chouans who were too far off to fight their wounded enemies hand to hand, reloaded their guns, and, struggling to their knees, fired and fell again.

On either side the struggle was pitiless, incessant, furious; civil war--that is war without mercy or compassion--waved its torch above the battlefield.

Cadoudal rode his horse around these living breastworks, firing at twenty paces, sometimes his pistols, sometimes a musket, which he discharged, cast aside, and picked up again reloaded. At each discharge a man fell. The third time he made this round General Hatry honored him with a fusillade. He disappeared in the flame and smoke, and Roland saw him go down, he and his horse, as if annihilated. Ten or a dozen Republicans sprang from the ranks and met as many Chouans; the struggle was terrible, hand to hand, body to body, but the Chouans, with their knives, were sure of the advantage.

Suddenly Cadoudal appeared, erect, a pistol in each hand; it was the death of two men; two men fell. Then through the gap left by these ten or twelve he flung himself forward with thirty men. He had picked up an army musket, and, using it like a club, he brought down a man with each blow. He broke his way through the battalion, and reappeared at the other side. Then, like a boar which returns upon the huntsman he has ripped up and trampled, he rushed back through the gaping wound and widened it. From that moment all was over.

General Hatry rallied a score of men, and, with bayonets down, they fell upon the circle that enveloped them. He marched at the head of his soldiers on foot; his horse had been killed. Ten men had fallen before the circle was broken, but at last he was beyond it. The Chouans wanted to pursue them, but Cadoudal, in a voice of thunder, called them back.

"You should not have allowed him to pass," he cried, "but having passed he is free to retreat."

The Chouans obeyed with the religious faith they placed in the words of their chief.

"And now," said Cadoudal, "cease firing; no more dead; make prisoners."

The Chouans drew together and surrounded the heaps of dead, and the few living men, more or less wounded, who lay among the dead.

Surrendering was still fighting in this fatal war, where on both sides the prisoners were shot--on the one side, because Chouans and Vendéans were considered brigands; on the other, because they knew not where to put the captives.

The Republicans threw their guns away, that they might not be forced to surrender them. When their captors approached them every cartridge-box was open; every man had fired his last shot.

Cadoudal walked back to Roland.

During the whole of this desperate struggle the young man had remained on the mound. With his eyes fixed on the battle, his hair damp with sweat, his breast heaving, he waited for the result. Then, when he saw the day was lost, his head fell upon his hands, and he still sat on, his forehead bowed to the earth.

Cadoudal reached him before he seemed to hear the sound of footsteps. He touched the young man's shoulder. Roland raised his head slowly without attempting to hide the two great tears that were rolling down his cheeks.

"General," said Roland, "do with me what you will. I am your prisoner."

"I can't make the First Consul's ambassador a prisoner," replied Cadoudal, laughing, "but I can ask him to do me a service."

"Command me, general."

"I need a hospital for the wounded, and a prison for prisoners; will you take the Republican soldiers, wounded and prisoners, back to Vannes."

"What do you mean, general?" exclaimed Roland.

"I give them, or rather I confide them to you. I regret that your horse was killed; so is mine. But there is still that of Brise-Bleu; accept it."

The young man made a motion of rejection.

"Until you can obtain another, of course," added Cadoudal, bowing.

Roland felt that he must put himself, at least in simplicity, on a level with the man with whom he was dealing.

"Shall I see you again, general?" he asked, rising.

"I doubt it, sir. My operations call me to the coast near Port-Louis; your duty recalls you to the Luxembourg."

"What shall I tell the First Consul, general?"

"What you have seen, sir. He must judge between the Abbé Bernier's diplomacy and that of Georges Cadoudal."

"After what I have seen, sir, I doubt if you ever have need of me," said Roland; "but in any case remember that you have a friend near the First Consul."

And he held out his hand to Cadoudal. The royalist took it with the same frankness and freedom he had shown before the battle.

"Farewell, Monsieur de Montrevel," said he, "I need not ask you to justify General Hatry. A defeat like that is fully as glorious as a victory."

During this time Brise-Bleu's horse had been led up for the Republican colonel.

He sprang into the saddle.

"By the bye," said Cadoudal, "as you go through La Roche-Bernard, just inquire what has happened to citizen Thomas Millière."

"He is dead," said a voice.

Coeur-de-Roi and his four men, covered with mud and sweat, had just arrived, but too late for the battle.

Roland cast a last glance at the battlefield, sighed, and, waving a last farewell to Cadoudal, started at a gallop across the fields to await, on the road to Vannes, the wagon-load of wounded and the prisoners he was asked to deliver to General Hatry.

Cadoudal had given a crown of six sous to each man.

Roland could not help reflecting that the gift was made with the money of the Directory sent to the West by Morgan and the Companions of Jehu.