PART III.--DÉRUCHETTE

BOOK I

NIGHT AND THE MOON

I

THE HARBOUR BELL

The St. Sampson of the present day is almost a city; the St. Sampson of forty years since was almost a village.

When the winter evenings were ended and spring had come, the inhabitants were not long out of bed after sundown. St. Sampson was an ancient parish which had long been accustomed to the sound of the curfew-bell, and which had a traditional habit of blowing out the candle at an early hour. Those old Norman villages are famous for early roosting, and the villagers are generally great rearers of poultry.

The people of St. Sampson, except a few rich families among the townsfolk, are also a population of quarriers and carpenters. The port is a port of ship repairing. The quarrying of stone and the fashioning of timber go on all day long; here the labourer with the pickaxe, there the workman with the mallet. At night they sink with fatigue, and sleep like lead. Rude labours bring heavy slumbers.

One evening, in the commencement of the month of May, after watching the crescent moon for some instants through the trees, and listening to the step of Déruchette, walking alone in the cool air in the garden of the Bravées, Mess Lethierry had returned to his room looking on the harbour, and had retired to rest; Douce and Grace were already a-bed. Except Déruchette, the whole household were sleeping. Doors and shutters were everywhere closed. Footsteps were silent in the streets. Some few lights, like winking eyes about to close in rest, showed here and there in windows in the roofs, indicating the hour of domestics going to bed. Nine had already struck in the old Romanesque belfry, surrounded by ivy, which shares with the church of St. Brélade at Jersey the peculiarity of having for its date four ones (IIII), which are used to signify eleven hundred and eleven.

The popularity of Mess Lethierry at St. Sampson had been founded on his success. The success at an end, there had come a void. It might be imagined that ill-fortune is contagious, and that the unsuccessful have a plague, so rapidly are they put in quarantine. The young men of well-to-do families avoided Déruchette. The isolation around the Bravées

was so complete that its inmates had not even yet heard the news of the great local event which had that day set all St. Sampson in a ferment. The rector of the parish, the Rev. Ebenezer Caudray, had become rich. His uncle, the magnificent Dean of St. Asaph, had just died in London. The news had been brought by the mail sloop, the Cashmere, arrived from England that very morning, and the mast of which could be perceived in the roads of St. Peter's Port. The Cashmere was to depart for Southampton at noon on the morrow, and, so the rumour ran, to convey the reverend gentleman, who had been suddenly summoned to England, to be present at the official opening of the will, not to speak of other urgent matters connected with an important inheritance. All day long St. Sampson had been conversing on this subject. The Cashmere, the Rev. Ebenezer, his deceased uncle, his riches, his departure, his possible preferment in the future, had formed the foundations of that perpetual buzzing. A solitary house, still uninformed on these matters, had remained at peace. This was the Bravées.

Mess Lethierry had jumped into his hammock, and lay down in his clothing.

Since the catastrophe of the Durande, to get into his hammock had been his resource. Every captive has recourse to stretching himself upon his pallet, and Mess Lethierry was the captive of his grief. To go to bed was a truce, a gain in breathing time, a suspension of ideas. He neither slept nor watched. Strictly speaking, for two months and a half--for so long was it since his misfortune--Mess Lethierry had been in a sort of somnambulism. He had not yet regained possession of his faculties. He

was in that cloudy and confused condition of intellect with which those are familiar who have undergone overwhelming afflictions. His reflections were not thought, his sleep was no repose. By day he was not awake, by night not asleep. He was up, and then gone to rest, that was all. When he was in his hammock forgetfulness came to him a little. He called that sleeping. Chimeras floated about him, and within him. The nocturnal cloud, full of confused faces, traversed his brain. Sometimes it was the Emperor Napoleon dictating to him the story of his life; sometimes there were several Déruchettes; strange birds were in the trees; the streets of Lons-le-Saulnier became serpents. Nightmares were the brief respites of despair. He passed his nights in dreaming, and his days in reverie.

Sometimes he remained all the afternoon at the window of his room, which looked out upon the port, with his head drooping, his elbows on the stone, his ears resting on his fists, his back turned to the whole world, his eye fixed on the old massive iron ring fastened in the wall of the house, at only a few feet from his window, where in the old days he used to moor the Durande. He was looking at the rust which gathered on the ring.

He was reduced to the mere mechanical habit of living.

The bravest men, when deprived of their most cherished idea, will come to this. His life had become a void. Life is a voyage; the idea is the itinerary. The plan of their course gone, they stop. The object is lost, the strength of purpose gone. Fate has a secret discretionary power. It

is able to touch with its rod even our moral being. Despair is almost the destitution of the soul. Only the greatest minds resist, and for what?

Mess Lethierry was always meditating, if absorption can be called meditation, in the depth of a sort of cloudy abyss. Broken words sometimes escaped him like these, "There is nothing left for me now, but to ask yonder for leave to go."

There was a certain contradiction in that nature, complex as the sea, of which Mess Lethierry was, so to speak, the product. Mess Lethierry's grief did not seek relief in prayer.

To be powerless is a certain strength. In the presence of our two great expressions of this blindness--destiny and nature--it is in his powerlessness that man has found his chief support in prayer.

Man seeks succour from his terror; his anxiety bids him kneel. Prayer, that mighty force of the soul, akin to mystery. Prayer addresses itself to the magnanimity of the Shades; prayer regards mystery with eyes themselves overshadowed by it, and beneath the power of its fixed and appealing gaze, we feel the possibility of the great Unknown unbending to reply.

The mere thought of such a possibility becomes a consolation.

But Mess Lethierry prayed not.

In the time when he was happy, God existed for him almost in visible contact. Lethierry addressed Him, pledged his word to Him, seemed at times to hold familiar intercourse with Him. But in the hour of his misfortune, a phenomenon not infrequent--the idea of God had become eclipsed in his mind. This happens when the mind has created for itself a deity clothed with human qualities.

In the state of mind in which he existed, there was for Lethierry only one clear vision--the smile of Déruchette. Beyond this all was dark.

For some time, apparently on account of the loss of the Durande, and of the blow which it had been to them, this pleasant smile had been rare. She seemed always thoughtful. Her birdlike playfulness, her childlike ways, were gone. She was never seen now in the morning, at the sound of the cannon which announced daybreak, saluting the rising sun with "Boom! Daylight! Come in, please!" At times her expression was very serious, a sad thing for that sweet nature. She made an effort, however, sometimes to laugh before Mess Lethierry and to divert him; but her cheerfulness grew tarnished from day to day--gathered dust like the wing of a butterfly with a pin through its body. Whether through sorrow for her uncle's sorrow--for there are griefs which are the reflections of other griefs--or whether for any other reasons, she appeared at this time to be much inclined towards religion. In the time of the old rector, M. Jaquemin Hérode, she scarcely went to church, as has been already said, four times a year. Now she was, on the contrary, assiduous in her attendance. She missed no service, neither of Sunday nor of Thursday.

Pious souls in the parish remarked with satisfaction that amendment. For it is a great blessing when a girl who runs so many dangers in the world turns her thoughts towards God. That enables the poor parents at least to be easy on the subject of love-making and what not.

In the evening, whenever the weather permitted, she walked for an hour or two in the garden of the Bravées. She was almost as pensive there as Mess Lethierry, and almost always alone. Déruchette went to bed last. This, however, did not prevent Douce and Grace watching her a little, by that instinct for spying which is common to servants; spying is such a relaxation after household work.

As to Mess Lethierry, in the abstracted state of his mind, these little changes in Déruchette's habits escaped him. Moreover, his nature had little in common with the Duenna. He had not even remarked her regularity at the church. Tenacious of his prejudices against the clergy and their sermons, he would have seen with little pleasure these frequent attendances at the parish church. It was not because his own moral condition was not undergoing change. Sorrow is a cloud which changes form.

Robust natures, as we have said, are sometimes almost overthrown by sudden great misfortunes; but not quite. Manly characters such as Lethierry's experience a reaction in a given time. Despair has its backward stages. From overwhelmment we rise to dejection; from dejection to affliction; from affliction to melancholy. Melancholy is a twilight state; suffering melts into it and becomes a sombre joy. Melancholy is

the pleasure of being sad.

These elegiac moods were not made for Lethierry. Neither the nature of his temperament nor the character of his misfortune suited those delicate shades. But at the moment at which we have returned to him, the reverie of his first despair had for more than a week been tending to disperse; without, however, leaving him less sad. He was more inactive, was always dull; but he was no longer overwhelmed. A certain perception of events and circumstances was returning to him, and he began to experience something of that phenomenon which may be called the return to reality.

Thus by day in the great lower room, he did not listen to the words of those about him, but he heard them. Grace came one morning quite triumphant to tell Déruchette that he had undone the cover of a newspaper.

This half acceptance of realities is in itself a good symptom, a token of convalescence. Great afflictions produce a stupor; it is by such little acts that men return to themselves. This improvement, however, is at first only an aggravation of the evil. The dreamy condition of mind in which the sufferer has lived, has served, while it lasted, to blunt his grief. His sight before was thick. He felt little. Now his view is clear, nothing escapes him; and his wounds re-open. Each detail that he perceives serves to remind him of his sorrow. He sees everything again in memory, every remembrance is a regret. All kinds of bitter aftertastes lurk in that return to life. He is better, and yet worse.

Such was the condition of Lethierry. In returning to full consciousness, his sufferings had become more distinct.

A sudden shock first recalled him to a sense of reality.

One afternoon, between the 15th and 20th of April, a double-knock at the door of the great lower room of the Bravées had signalled the arrival of the postman. Douce had opened the door; there was a letter.

The letter came from beyond sea; it was addressed to Mess Lethierry, and bore the postmark "Lisbon."

Douce had taken the letter to Mess Lethierry, who was in his room. He had taken it, placed it mechanically upon the table, and had not looked at it.

The letter remained an entire week upon the table without being unsealed.

It happened, however, one morning that Douce said to Mess Lethierry:

"Shall I brush the dust off your letter, sir?"

Lethierry seemed to arouse from his lethargy.

"Ay, ay! You are right," he said; and he opened the letter, and read as follows:--

"At Sea, 10th March.

"To Mess Lethierry of St. Sampson.

"You will be gratified to receive news of me. I am aboard the Tamaulipas, bound for the port of 'No-return.' Among the crew is a sailor named Ahier-Tostevin, from Guernsey, who will return and will have some facts to communicate to you. I take the opportunity of our speaking a vessel, the Herman Cortes, bound for Lisbon, to forward you this letter.

"You will be astonished to learn that I am going to be honest.

"As honest as Sieur Clubin.

"I am bound to believe that you know of certain recent occurrences; nevertheless, it is, perhaps, not altogether superfluous to send you a full account of them.

"To proceed then.

"I have returned you your money.

"Some years ago, I borrowed from you, under somewhat irregular circumstances, the sum of fifty thousand francs. Before leaving St. Malo lately, I placed in the hands of your confidential man of business,

Sieur Clubin, on your account three bank-notes of one thousand pounds each; making together seventy-five thousand francs. You will no doubt find this reimbursement sufficient.

"Sieur Clubin acted for you, and received your money, including interest, in a remarkably energetic manner. He appeared to me, indeed, singularly zealous. This is, in fact, my reason for apprising you of the facts.

"Your other confidential man of business,

"RANTAINE.

"Postscript--Sieur Clubin was in possession of a revolver, which will explain to you the circumstance of my having no receipt."

* * * * *

He who has ever touched a torpedo, or a Leyden-jar fully charged, may have a notion of the effect produced on Mess Lethierry by the reading of this letter.

Under that envelope, in that sheet of paper folded in four, to which he had at first paid so little attention, lay the elements of an extraordinary commotion.

He recognised the writing and the signature. As to the facts which the

letter contained, at first he understood nothing.

The excitement of the event, however, soon gave movement to his faculties.

The effective part of the shock he had received lay in the phenomenon of the seventy-five thousand francs entrusted by Rantaine to Clubin; this was a riddle which compelled Lethierry's brain to work. Conjecture is a healthy occupation for the mind. Reason is awakened: logic is called into play.

For some time past public opinion in Guernsey had been undergoing a reaction on the subject of Clubin: that man of such high reputation for honour during many years; that man so unanimously regarded with esteem. People had begun to question and to doubt; there were wagers pro and con. Some light had been thrown on the question in singular ways. The figure of Clubin began to become clearer, that is to say, he began to be blacker in the eyes of the world.

A judicial inquiry had taken place at St. Malo, for the purpose of ascertaining what had become of the coast-guardman, number 619. Legal perspicacity had got upon a false scent, a thing which happens not unfrequently. It had started with the hypothesis that the man had been enticed by Zuela, and shipped aboard the Tamaulipas for Chili. This ingenious supposition had led to a considerable amount of wasted conjecture. The shortsightedness of justice had failed to take note of Rantaine; but in the progress of inquiry the authorities had come upon

other clues. The affair, so obscure, became complicated. Clubin had become mixed up with the enigma. A coincidence, perhaps a direct connection, had been found between the departure of the Tamaulipas and the loss of the Durande. At the wine-shop near the Dinan Gate, where Clubin thought himself entirely unknown, he had been recognised. The wine-shop keeper had talked; Clubin had bought a bottle of brandy that night. For whom? The gunsmith of St. Vincent Street, too, had talked. Clubin had purchased a revolver. For what object? The landlord of the "Jean Auberge" had talked. Clubin had absented himself in an inexplicable manner. Captain Gertrais-Gaboureau had talked; Clubin had determined to start, although warned, and knowing that he might expect a great fog. The crew of the Durande had talked. In fact, the collection of the freight had been neglected, and the stowage badly arranged, a negligence easy to comprehend, if the captain had determined to wreck the ship. The Guernsey passenger, too, had spoken. Clubin had evidently imagined that he had run upon the Hanways. The Torteval people had spoken. Clubin had visited that neighbourhood a few days before the loss of the Durande, and had been seen walking in the direction of Pleinmont, near the Hanways. He had with him a travelling-bag. "He had set out with it, and come back without it." The birds'-nesters had spoken: their story seemed to be possibly connected with Clubin's disappearance, if instead of ghosts they supposed smugglers. Finally, the haunted house of Pleinmont itself had spoken. Persons who had determined to get information had climbed and entered the windows, and had found inside--what? The very travelling-bag which had been seen in Sieur Clubin's possession. The authorities of the Douzaine of Torteval had taken possession of the bag and had it opened. It was found to contain

provisions, a telescope, a chronometer, a man's clothing, and linen marked with Clubin's initials. All this in the gossip of St. Malo and Guernsey became more and more like a case of fraud. Obscure hints were brought together; there appeared to have been a singular disregard of advice; a willingness to encounter the dangers of the fog; a suspected negligence in the stowage of the cargo. Then there was the mysterious bottle of brandy; a drunken helmsman; a substitution of the captain for the helmsman; a management of the rudder, to say the least, unskilful. The heroism of remaining behind upon the wreck began to look like roguery. Clubin besides had evidently been deceived as to the rock he was on. Granted an intention to wreck the vessel, it was easy to understand the choice of the Hanways, the shore easily reached by swimming, and the intended concealment in the haunted house awaiting the opportunity for flight. The travelling-bag, that suspicious preparative, completed the demonstration. By what link this affair connected itself with the other affair of the disappearance of the coast-guardman nobody knew. People imagined some connection, and that was all. They had a glimpse in their minds of the look-out-man, number 619, alongside of the mysterious Clubin--quite a tragic drama. Clubin possibly was not an actor in it, but his presence was visible in the side scenes.

The supposition of a wilful destruction of the Durande did not explain everything. There was a revolver in the story, with no part yet assigned to it. The revolver, probably, belonged to the other affair.

The scent of the public is keen and true. Its instinct excels in those discoveries of truth by pieces and fragments. Still, amidst these facts,

which seemed to point pretty clearly to a case of barratry, there were serious difficulties.

Everything was consistent; everything coherent; but a basis was wanting.

People do not wreck vessels for the pleasure of wrecking them. Men do not run all those risks of fog, rocks, swimming, concealment, and flight without an interest. What could have been Clubin's interest?

The act seemed plain, but the motive was puzzling.

Hence a doubt in many minds. Where there is no motive, it is natural to infer that there was no act.

The missing link was important. The letter from Rantaine seemed to supply it.

This letter furnished a motive for Clubin's supposed crime: seventy-five thousand francs to be appropriated.

Rantaine was the Deus ex machinâ. He had descended from the clouds with a lantern in his hand. His letter was the final light upon the affair. It explained everything, and even promised a witness in the person of Ahier-Tostevin.

The part which it at once suggested for the revolver was decisive. Rantaine was undoubtedly well informed. His letter pointed clearly the

explanation of the mystery.

There could be no possible palliation of Clubin's crime. He had premeditated the shipwreck; the proofs were the preparations discovered in the haunted house. Even supposing him innocent, and admitting the wreck to have been accidental, would he not, at the last moment, when he had determined to sacrifice himself with the vessel, have entrusted the seventy-five thousand francs to the men who escaped in the long-boat. The evidence was strikingly complete. Now what had become of Clubin? He had probably been the victim of his blunder. He had doubtless perished upon the Douvres.

All this construction of surmises, which were not far from the reality, had for several days occupied the mind of Mess Lethierry. The letter from Rantaine had done him the service of setting him to think. He was at first shaken by his surprise; then he made an effort to reflect. He made another effort more difficult still, that of inquiry. He was induced to listen, and even seek conversation. At the end of a week, he had become, to a certain degree, in the world again; his thoughts had regained their coherence, and he was almost restored. He had emerged from his confused and troubled state.

Rantaine's letter, even admitting that Mess Lethierry could ever have entertained any hope of the reimbursement of his money, destroyed that last chance.

It added to the catastrophe of the Durande this new wreck of

seventy-five thousand francs. It put him in possession of that amount just so far as to make him sensible of its loss. The letter revealed to him the extreme point in his ruin.

Hence he experienced a new and very painful sensation, which we have already spoken of. He began to take an interest in his household--what it was to be in the future--how he was to set things in order; matters of which he had taken no heed for two months past. These trifling cares wounded him with a thousand tiny points, worse in their aggregate than the old despair. A sorrow is doubly burdensome which has to be endured in each item, and while disputing inch by inch with fate for ground already lost. Ruin is endurable in the mass, but not in the dust and fragments of the fallen edifice. The great fact may overwhelm, but the details torture. The catastrophe which lately fell like a thunderbolt, becomes now a cruel persecution. Humiliation comes to aggravate the blow. A second desolation succeeds the first, with features more repulsive. You descend one degree nearer to annihilation. The winding-sheet becomes changed to sordid rags.

No thought is more bitter than that of one's own gradual fall from a social position.

Ruin is simple enough. A violent shock; a cruel turn of fate; a catastrophe once for all. Be it so. We submit, and all is over. You are ruined: it is well; you are dead? No; you are still living. On the morrow you know it well. By what? By the pricking of a pin. Yonder passer-by omits to recognise you; the tradesmen's bills rain down upon

you; and yonder is one of your enemies, who is smiling. Perhaps he is thinking of Arnal's last pun; but it is all the same. The pun would not have appeared to him so inimitable but for your ruin. You read your own sudden insignificance even in looks of indifference. Friends who used to dine at your table become of opinion that three courses were an extravagance. Your faults are patent to the eyes of everybody; ingratitude having nothing more to expect, proclaims itself openly; every idiot has foreseen your misfortunes. The malignant pull you to pieces; the more malignant profess to pity. And then come a hundred paltry details. Nausea succeeds to grief. You have been wont to indulge in wine; you must now drink cider. Two servants, too! Why, one will be too many. It will be necessary to discharge this one, and get rid of that. Flowers in your garden are superfluous; you will plant it with potatoes. You used to make presents of your fruits to friends; you will send them henceforth to market. As to the poor, it will be absurd to think of giving anything to them. Are you not poor yourself? And then there is the painful question of dress. To have to refuse a wife a new ribbon, what a torture! To have to refuse one who has made you a gift of her beauty a trifling article; to haggle over such matters, like a miser! Perhaps she will say to you, "What! rob my garden of its flowers, and now refuse one for my bonnet!" Ah me! to have to condemn her to shabby dresses. The family table is silent. You fancy that those around it think harshly of you. Beloved faces have become clouded. This is what is meant by falling fortunes. It is to die day by day. To be struck down is like the blast of the furnace; to decay like this is the torture of the slow fire.

An overwhelming blow is a sort of Waterloo, a slow decay, a St. Helena. Destiny, incarnate in the form of Wellington, has still some dignity; but how sordid in the shape of Hudson Lowe. Fate becomes then a paltry huckster. We find the man of Campo Formio quarrelling about a pair of stockings; we see that dwarfing of Napoleon which makes England less. Waterloo and St. Helena! Reduced to humbler proportions, every ruined man has traversed those two phases.

On the evening we have mentioned, and which was one of the first evenings in May, Lethierry, leaving Déruchette to walk by moonlight in the garden, had gone to bed more depressed than ever.

All these mean and repulsive details, peculiar to worldly misfortune; all these trifling cares, which are at first insipid, and afterwards harassing, were revolving in his mind. A sullen load of miseries! Mess Lethierry felt that his fall was irremediable. What could he do? What would become of them? What sacrifices should he be compelled to impose on Déruchette? Whom should he discharge--Douce or Grace? Would they have to sell the Bravées? Would they not be compelled to leave the island? To be nothing where he had been everything; it was a terrible fall indeed.

And to know that the old times had gone for ever! To recall those journeys to and fro, uniting France with those numberless islands; the Tuesday's departure, the Friday's return, the crowd on the quay, those great cargoes, that industry, that prosperity, that proud direct navigation, that machinery embodying the will of man, that all-powerful boiler, that smoke, all that reality! The steamboat had been the final

crown of the compass; the needle indicating the direct track, the steam-vessel following it. One proposing, the other executing. Where was she now, his Durande, that mistress of the seas, that queen who had made him a king? To have been so long the man of ideas in his own country, the man of success, the man who revolutionised navigation; and then to have to give up all, to abdicate! To cease to exist, to become a bye-word, an empty bag which once was full. To belong to the past, after having so long represented the future. To come down to be an object of pity to fools, to witness the triumph of routine, obstinacy, conservatism, selfishness, ignorance. To see the old barbarous sailing cutters crawling to and fro upon the sea: the outworn old-world prejudices young again; to have wasted a whole life; to have been a light, and to suffer this eclipse. Ah! what a sight it was upon the waves, that noble funnel, that prodigious cylinder, that pillar with its capital of smoke, that column grander than any in the Place Vendôme, for on that there was only a man, while on this stood Progress. The ocean was subdued; it was certainty upon the open sea. And had all this been witnessed in that little island, in that little harbour, in that little town of St. Sampson? Yes; it had been witnessed. And could it be that, having seen it, all had vanished to be seen no more.

All this series of regrets tortured Lethierry. There is such a thing as a mental sobbing. Never, perhaps, had he felt his misfortune more bitterly. A certain numbness follows this acute suffering. Under the weight of his sorrow he gradually dosed.

For about two hours he remained in this state, feverish, sleeping a

little, meditating much. Such torpors are accompanied by an obscure labour of the brain, which is inexpressibly wearying. Towards the middle of the night, about midnight, a little before or a little after, he shook off his lethargy. He aroused, and opened his eyes. His window was directly in front of his hammock. He saw something extraordinary.

A form was before the window; a marvellous form. It was the funnel of a steam-vessel.

Mess Lethierry started, and sat upright in his bed. The hammock oscillated like a swing in a tempest. Lethierry stared. A vision filled the window-frame. There was the harbour flooded with the light of the moon, and against that glitter, quite close to his house, stood forth, tall, round, and black, a magnificent object.

The funnel of a steam-vessel was there.

Lethierry sprang out of his hammock, ran to the window, lifted the sash, leaned out, and recognised it.

The funnel of the Durande stood before him.

It was in the old place.

Its four chains supported it, made fast to the bulwarks of a vessel in which, beneath the funnel, he could distinguish a dark mass of irregular outline.

Lethierry recoiled, turned his back to the window, and dropped in a sitting posture into his hammock again.

Then he returned, and once more he saw the vision.

An instant afterwards, or in about the time occupied by a flash of lightning, he was out upon the quay, with a lantern in his hand.

A bark carrying a little backward a massive block from which issued the straight funnel before the window of the Bravées, was made fast to the mooring-ring of the Durande. The bows of the bark stretched beyond the corner of the wall of the house, and were level with the quay.

There was no one aboard.

The vessel was of a peculiar shape. All Guernsey would have recognised it. It was the old Dutch sloop.

Lethierry jumped aboard; and ran forward to the block which he saw beyond the mast.

It was there, entire, complete, intact, standing square and firm upon its cast-iron flooring; the boiler had all its rivets, the axle of the paddle-wheels was raised erect, and made fast near the boiler; the brine-pump was in its place; nothing was wanting.

Lethierry examined the machinery.

The lantern and the moon helped him in his examination. He went over every part of the mechanism.

He noticed the two cases at the sides. He examined the axle of the wheels.

He went into the little cabin; it was empty.

He returned to the engine, and felt it, looked into the boiler, and knelt down to examine it inside.

He placed his lantern within the furnace, where the light, illuminating all the machinery, produced almost the illusion of an engine-room with its fire.

Then he burst into a wild laugh, sprang to his feet, and with his eye fixed on the engine, and his arms outstretched towards the funnel, he cried aloud, "Help."

The harbour bell was upon the quay, at a few paces distance. He ran to it, seized the chain, and began to pull it violently.

II

THE HARBOUR BELL AGAIN

Gilliatt, in fact, after a passage without accident, but somewhat slow on account of the heavy burden of the sloop, had arrived at St. Sampson after dark, and nearer ten than nine o'clock.

He had calculated the time. The half-flood had arrived. There was plenty of water, and the moon was shining; so that he was able to enter the port.

The little harbour was silent. A few vessels were moored there, with their sails brailed up to the yards, their tops over, and without lanterns. At the far end a few others were visible, high and dry in the careenage, where they were undergoing repairs; large hulls dismasted and stripped, with their planking open at various parts, lifting high the ends of their timbers, and looking like huge dead beetles lying on their backs with their legs in the air.

As soon as he had cleared the harbour mouth, Gilliatt examined the port and the quay. There was no light to be seen either at the Bravées or elsewhere. The place was deserted, save, perhaps, by some one going to or returning from the parsonage-house; nor was it possible to be sure even of this; for the night blurred every outline, and the moonlight

always gives to objects a vague appearance. The distance added to the indistinctness. The parsonage-house at that period was situated on the other side of the harbour, where there stands at the present day an open mast-house.

Gilliatt had approached the Bravées quietly, and had made the sloop fast to the ring of the Durande, under Mess Lethierry's window.

He leaped over the bulwarks, and was ashore.

Leaving the sloop behind him by the quay, he turned the angle of the house, passed along a little narrow street, then along another, did not even notice the pathway which branched off leading to the Bû de la Rue, and in a few minutes found himself at that corner of the wall where there were wild mallows with pink flowers in June, with holly, ivy, and nettles. Many a time concealed behind the bushes, seated on a stone, in the summer days, he had watched here through long hours, even for whole months, often tempted to climb the wall, over which he contemplated the garden of the Bravées and the two windows of a little room seen through the branches of the trees. The stone was there still; the bushes, the low wall, the angle, as quiet and dark as ever. Like an animal returning to its hole, gliding rather than walking, he made his way in. Once seated there, he made no movement. He looked around; saw again the garden, the pathways, the beds of flowers, the house, the two windows of the chamber. The moonlight fell upon this dream. He felt it horrible to be compelled to breathe, and did what he could to prevent it.

He seemed to be gazing on a vision of paradise, and was afraid that all would vanish. It was almost impossible that all these things could be really before his eyes; and if they were, it could only be with that imminent danger of melting into air which belongs to things divine. A breath, and all must be dissipated. He trembled with the thought.

Before him, not far off, at the side of one of the alleys in the garden, was a wooden seat painted green. The reader will remember this seat.

Gilliatt looked up at the two windows. He thought of the slumber of some one possibly in that room. Behind that wall she was no doubt sleeping. He wished himself elsewhere, yet would sooner have died than go away. He thought of a gentle breathing moving a woman's breast. It was she, that vision, that purity in the clouds, that form haunting him by day and night. She was there! He thought of her so far removed, and yet so near as to be almost within reach of his delight; he thought of that impossible ideal drooping in slumber, and like himself, too, visited by visions; of that being so long desired, so distant, so impalpable--her closed eyelids, her face resting on her hand; of the mystery of sleep in its relations with that pure spirit, of what dreams might come to one who was herself a dream. He dared not think beyond, and yet he did. He ventured on those familiarities which the fancy may indulge in; the notion of how much was feminine in that angelic being disturbed his thoughts. The darkness of night emboldens timid imaginations to take these furtive glances. He was vexed within himself, feeling on reflection as if it were profanity to think of her so boldly; yet still constrained, in spite of himself, he tremblingly gazed into the

invisible. He shuddered almost with a sense of pain as he imagined her room, a petticoat on a chair, a mantle fallen on the carpet, a band unbuckled, a handkerchief. He imagined her corset with its lace hanging to the ground, her stockings, her boots. His soul was among the stars.

The stars are made for the human heart of a poor man like Gilliatt not less than for that of the rich and great. There is a certain degree of passion by which every man becomes wrapped in a celestial light. With a rough and primitive nature, this truth is even more applicable. An uncultivated mind is easily touched with dreams.

Delight is a fulness which overflows like any other. To see those windows was almost too much happiness for Gilliatt.

Suddenly, he looked and saw her.

From the branches of a clump of bushes, already thickened by the spring, there issued with a spectral slowness a celestial figure, a dress, a divine face, almost a shining light beneath the moon.

Gilliatt felt his powers failing him: it was Déruchette.

Déruchette approached. She stopped. She walked back a few paces, stopped again, then returned and sat upon the wooden bench. The moon was in the trees, a few clouds floated among the pale stars; the sea murmured to the shadows in an undertone, the town was sleeping, a thin haze was rising from the horizon, the melancholy was profound. Déruchette

inclined her head, with those thoughtful eyes which look attentive yet see nothing. She was seated sideways, and had nothing on her head but a little cap untied, which showed upon her delicate neck the commencement of her hair. She twirled mechanically a ribbon of her cap around one of her fingers; the half light showed the outline of her hands like those of a statue; her dress was of one of those shades which by night looked white: the trees stirred as if they felt the enchantment which she shed around her. The tip of one of her feet was visible. Her lowered eyelids had that vague contraction which suggests a tear checked in its course, or a thought suppressed. There was a charming indecision in the movements of her arms, which had no support to lean on; a sort of floating mingled with every posture. It was rather a gleam than a light--rather a grace than a goddess; the folds of her dress were exquisite; her face which might inspire adoration, seemed meditative, like portraits of the Virgin. It was terrible to think how near she was: Gilliatt could hear her breathe.

A nightingale was singing in the distance. The stirring of the wind among the branches set in movement, the inexpressible silence of the night. Déruchette, beautiful, divine, appeared in the twilight like a creation from those rays and from the perfumes in the air. That widespread enchantment seemed to concentre and embody itself mysteriously in her; she became its living manifestation. She seemed the outblossoming of all that shadow and silence.

But the shadow and silence which floated lightly about her weighed heavily on Gilliatt. He was bewildered; what he experienced is not to be

told in words. Emotion is always new, and the word is always enough. Hence the impossibility of expressing it. Joy is sometimes overwhelming. To see Déruchette, to see herself, to see her dress, her cap, her ribbon, which she twined around her finger, was it possible to imagine it? Was it possible to be thus near her; to hear her breathe? She breathed! then the stars might breathe also. Gilliatt felt a thrill through him. He was the most miserable and yet the happiest of men. He knew not what to do. His delirious joy at seeing her annihilated him. Was it indeed Déruchette there, and he so near? His thoughts, bewildered and yet fixed, were fascinated by that figure as by a dazzling jewel. He gazed upon her neck--her hair. He did not even say to himself that all that would now belong to him, that before long--to-morrow, perhaps--he would have the right to take off that cap, to unknot that ribbon. He would not have conceived for a moment the audacity of thinking even so far. Touching in idea is almost like touching with the hand. Love was with Gilliatt like honey to the bear. He thought confusedly; he knew not what possessed him. The nightingale still sang. He felt as if about to breathe his life out.

The idea of rising, of jumping over the wall, of speaking to Déruchette, never came into his mind. If it had he would have turned and fled. If anything resembling a thought had begun to dawn in his mind, it was this: that Déruchette was there, that he wanted nothing more, and that eternity had begun.

A noise aroused them both--her from her reverie--him from his ecstasy.

Some one was walking in the garden. It was not possible to see who was approaching on account of the trees. It was the footstep of a man.

Déruchette raised her eyes.

The steps drew nearer, then ceased. The person walking had stopped. He must have been quite near. The path beside which was the bench wound between two clumps of trees. The stranger was there in the alley between the trees, at a few paces from the seat.

Accident had so placed the branches, that Déruchette could see the newcomer while Gilliatt could not.

The moon cast on the ground beyond the trees a shadow which reached to the garden seat.

Gilliatt could see this shadow.

He looked at Déruchette.

She was quite pale; her mouth was partly open, as with a suppressed cry of surprise. She had just half risen from the bench, and sunk again upon it. There was in her attitude a mixture of fascination with a desire to fly. Her surprise was enchantment mingled with timidity. She had upon her lips almost the light of a smile, with the fulness of tears in her eyes. She seemed as if transfigured by that presence; as if the being whom she saw before her belonged not to this earth. The reflection of an

angel was in her look.

The stranger, who was to Gilliatt only a shadow, spoke. A voice issued from the trees, softer than the voice of a woman; yet it was the voice of a man. Gilliatt heard these words:

"I see you, mademoiselle, every Sunday and every Thursday. They tell me that once you used not to come so often. It is a remark that has been made. I ask your pardon. I have never spoken to you; it was my duty; but I come to speak to you to-day, for it is still my duty. It is right that I speak to you first. The Cashmere sails to-morrow. This is why I have come. You walk every evening in your garden. It would be wrong of me to know your habits so well, if I had not the thought that I have. Mademoiselle, you are poor; since this morning I am rich. Will you have me for your husband?"

Déruchette joined her two hands in a suppliant attitude, and looked at the speaker, silent, with fixed eyes, and trembling from head to foot.

The voice continued:

"I love you. God made not the heart of man to be silent. He has promised him eternity with the intention that he should not be alone. There is for me but one woman upon earth. It is you. I think of you as of a prayer. My faith is in God, and my hope in you. What wings I have you bear. You are my life, and already my supreme happiness."

"Sir," said Déruchette, "there is no one to answer in the house!"

The voice rose again:

"Yes, I have encouraged that dream. Heaven has not forbidden us to dream. You are like a glory in my eyes. I love you deeply, mademoiselle. To me you are holy innocence. I know it is the hour at which your household have retired to rest, but I had no choice of any other moment. Do you remember that passage of the Bible which some one read before us; it was the twenty-fifth chapter of Genesis. I have thought of it often since. M. Hérode said to me, you must have a rich wife. I replied no, I must have a poor wife. I speak to you, mademoiselle, without venturing to approach you; I would step even further back if it was your wish that my shadow should not touch your feet. You alone are supreme. You will come to me if such is your will. I love and wait. You are the living form of a benediction."

"I did not know, sir," stammered Déruchette, "that any one remarked me on Sundays and Thursdays."

The voice continued:

"We are powerless against celestial things. The whole Law is love. Marriage is Canaan; you are to me the promised land of beauty."

Déruchette replied, "I did not think I did wrong any more than other persons who are strict."

The voice continued:

"God manifests his will in the flowers, in the light of dawn, in the spring; and love is of his ordaining. You are beautiful in this holy shadow of night. This garden has been tended by you; in its perfumes there is something of your breath. The affinities of our souls do not depend on us. They cannot be counted with our sins. You were there, that was all. I was there, that was all. I did nothing but feel that I loved you. Sometimes my eyes rested upon you. I was wrong, but what could I do. It was through looking at you that all happened. I could not restrain my gaze. There are mysterious impulses which are above our search. The heart is the chief of all temples. To have your spirit in my house--this is the terrestrial paradise for which I hope. Say, will you be mine. As long as I was poor, I spoke not. I know your age. You are twenty-one; I am twenty-six. I go to-morrow; if you refuse me I return no more. Oh, be my betrothed; will you not? More than once have my eyes, in spite of myself, addressed to you that question. I love you; answer me. I will speak to your uncle as soon as he is able to receive me; but I turn first to you. To Rebecca I plead for Rebecca; unless you love me not."

Déruchette hung her head, and murmured:

"Oh! I worship him."

The words were spoken in a voice so low, that only Gilliatt heard them.

She remained with her head lowered as if by shading her face she hoped to conceal her thoughts.

There was a pause. No leaf among the trees was stirred. It was that solemn and peaceful moment when the slumber of external things mingles with the sleep of living creatures; and night seems to listen to the beating of Nature's heart. In the midst of that retirement, like a harmony making the silence more complete, rose the wide murmur of the sea.

The voice was heard again.

"Mademoiselle!"

Déruchette started.

Again the voice spoke.

"You are silent."

"What would you have me say?"

"I wait for your reply."

"God has heard it," said Déruchette.

Then the voice became almost sonorous, and at the same time softer than before, and these words issued from the leaves as from a burning bush:

"You are my betrothed. Come then to me. Let the blue sky, with all its stars, be witness of this taking of my soul to thine; and let our first embrace be mingled with that firmament."

Déruchette arose, and remained an instant motionless, looking straight before her, doubtless in another's eyes. Then, with slow steps, with head erect, her arms drooping, but with the fingers of her hands wide apart, like one who leans on some unseen support, she advanced towards the trees, and was out of sight.

A moment afterwards, instead of the one shadow upon the gravelled walk, there were two. They mingled together. Gilliatt saw at his feet the embrace of those two shadows.

In certain moments of crisis, time flows from us as his sands from the hour-glass, and we have no feeling of his flight. That pair on the one hand, who were ignorant of the presence of a witness, and saw him not; on the other, that witness of their joy who could not see them, but who knew of their presence--how many minutes did they remain thus in that mysterious suspension of themselves? It would be impossible to say. Suddenly a noise burst forth at a distance. A voice was heard crying "Help!" and the harbour bell began to sound. It is probable that in those celestial transports of delight they heard no echo of that tumult.

The bell continued to ring. Any one who had sought Gilliatt then in the angle of the wall would have found him no longer there.

BOOK II

GRATITUDE AND DESPOTISM

I

JOY SURROUNDED BY TORTURES

Mess Lethierry pulled the bell furiously, then stopped abruptly. A man had just turned the corner of the quay. It was Gilliatt.

Lethierry ran towards him, or rather flung himself upon him; seized his hand between his own, and looked him in the face for a moment, silent. It was the silence of an explosion struggling to find an issue.

Then pulling and shaking him with violence, and squeezing him in his arms, he compelled him to enter the lower room of the Bravées, pushed back with his heel the door which had remained half opened, sat down, or sank into a chair beside a great table lighted by the moon, the reflection of which gave a vague pallor to Gilliatt's face, and with a voice of intermingled laughter and tears, cried:

"Ah! my son; my player of the bagpipe! I knew well that it was you. The sloop, parbleu! Tell me the story. You went there, then. Why, they would have burnt you a hundred years ago! It is magic! There isn't a screw missing. I have looked at everything already, recognised everything, handled everything. I guessed that the paddles were in the two cases. And here you are once more! I have been looking for you in the little cabin. I rang the bell. I was seeking for you. I said to myself, 'Where is he, that I may devour him?' You must admit that wonderful things do come to pass. He has brought back life to me. Tonnerre! you are an angel! Yes, yes; it is my engine. Nobody will believe it; people will see it, and say, 'It can't be true.' Not a tap, not a pin missing. The feed-pipe has never budged an inch. It is incredible that there should have been no more damage. We have only to put a little oil. But how did you accomplish it? To think that the Durande will be moving again. The axle of the wheels must have been taken to pieces by some watchmaker. Give me your word that I am not crazy."

He sprang to his feet, breathed a moment, and continued:

"Assure me of that. What a revolution! I pinched myself to be certain I was not dreaming. You are my child, you are my son, you are my Providence. Brave lad! To go and fetch my good old engine. In the open sea, among those cut-throat rocks. I have seen some strange things in my life; nothing like that. I have known Parisians, who were veritable demons, but I'll defy them to have done that. It beats the Bastille. I have seen the gauchos labouring in the Pampas, with a crooked branch

of a tree for a plough and a bundle of thorn-bushes for a harrow, dragged by a leathern strap; they get harvests of wheat that way, with grains as big as hedgenuts. But that is a trifle compared with your feats. You have performed a miracle--a real one. Ah! gredin! let me hug you. How they will gossip in St. Sampson. I shall set to work at once to build the boat. It is astonishing that the crank is all right. Gentlemen, he has been to the Douvres; I say to the Douvres. He went alone. The Douvres! I defy you to find a worse spot. Do you know, have they told you, that it's proved that Clubin sent the Durande to the bottom to swindle me out of money which he had to bring me? He made Tangrouille drunk. It's a long story. I'll tell you another day of his piratical tricks. I, stupid idiot, had confidence in Clubin. But he trapped himself, the villain, for he couldn't have got away. There is a God above, scoundrel! Do you see, Gilliatt, bang! bang! the irons in the fire; we'll begin at once to rebuild the Durande. We'll have her twenty feet longer. They build them longer now than they did. I'll buy the wood from Dantzic and Brême. Now I have got the machinery they will give me credit again. They'll have confidence now."

Mess Lethierry stopped, lifted his eyes with that look which sees the heavens through the roof, and muttered, "Yes, there is a power on high!"

Then he placed the middle finger of his right hand between his two eyebrows, and tapped with his nail there, an action which indicates a project passing through the mind, and he continued:

"Nevertheless, to begin again, on a grand scale, a little ready money

would have been useful. Ah! if I only had my three bank-notes, the seventy-five thousand francs that that robber Rantaine returned, and that vagabond Clubin stole."

Gilliatt silently felt in his pocket, and drew out something which he placed before him. It was the leathern belt that he had brought back. He opened, and spread it out upon the table; in the inside the word "Clubin" could be deciphered in the light of the moon. He then took out of the pocket of the belt a box, and out of the box three pieces of paper, which he unfolded and offered to Lethierry.

Lethierry examined them. It was light enough to read the figures "1000," and the word "thousand" was also perfectly visible. Mess Lethierry took the three notes, placed them on the table one beside the other, looked at them, looked at Gilliatt, stood for a moment dumb; and then began again, like an eruption after an explosion:

"These too! You are a marvel. My bank-notes! all three. A thousand pounds each. My seventy-five thousand francs. Why, you must have gone down to the infernal regions. It is Clubin's belt. Pardieu! I can read his vile name. Gilliatt has brought back engine and money too. There will be something to put in the papers. I will buy some timber of the finest quality. I guess how it was; you found his carcase; Clubin mouldering away in some corner. We'll have some Dantzic pine and Brême oak; we'll have a first-rate planking--oak within and pine without. In old times they didn't build so well, but their work lasted longer; the wood was better seasoned, because they did not build so much. We'll

build the hull perhaps of elm. Elm is good for the parts in the water. To be dry sometimes, and sometimes wet, rots the timbers; the elm requires to be always wet; it's a wood that feeds upon water. What a splendid Durande we'll build. The lawyers will not trouble me again. I shall want no more credit. I have some money of my own. Did ever any one see a man like Gilliatt. I was struck down to the ground, I was a dead man. He comes and sets me up again as firm as ever. And all the while I was never thinking about him. He had gone clean out of my mind; but I recollect everything now. Poor lad! Ah! by the way, you know you are to marry Déruchette."

Gilliatt leaned with his back against the wall, like one who staggers, and said in a tone very low, but distinct:

"No."

Mess Lethierry started.

"How, no!"

Gilliatt replied:

"I do not love her."

Mess Lethierry went to the window, opened and reclosed it, took the three bank-notes, folded them, placed the iron box on top, scratched his head, seized Clubin's belt, flung it violently against the wall, and

exclaimed:

"You must be mad."

He thrust his fists into his pockets, and exclaimed:

"You don't love Déruchette? What! was it at me, then, that you used to play the bagpipe?"

Gilliatt, still supporting himself by the wall, turned pale, as a man near his end. As he became pale, Lethierry became redder.

"There's an idiot for you! He doesn't love Déruchette. Very good; make up your mind to love her, for she shall never marry any but you. A devilish pretty story that; and you think that I believe you. If there is anything really the matter with you, send for a doctor; but don't talk nonsense. You can't have had time to quarrel, or get out of temper with her. It is true that lovers are great fools sometimes. Come now, what are your reasons? If you have any, say. People don't make geese of themselves without reasons. But, I have wool in my ears; perhaps I didn't understand. Repeat to me what you said."

Gilliatt replied:

"I said, No!"

"You said, No. He holds to it, the lunatic! You must be crazy. You said,

No. Here's a stupidity beyond anything ever heard of. Why, people have had their heads shaved for much less than that. What! you don't like Déruchette? Oh, then, it was out of affection for the old man that you did all these things? It was for the sake of papa that you went to the Douvres, that you endured cold and heat, and was half dead with hunger and thirst, and ate the limpets off the rocks, and had the fog, the rain, and the wind for your bedroom, and brought me back my machine, just as you might bring a pretty woman her little canary that had escaped from its cage. And the tempest that we had three days ago. Do you think I don't bear it in mind? You must have had a time of it! It was in the midst of all this misery, alongside of my old craft, that you shaped, and cut, and turned, and twisted, and dragged about, and filed, and sawed, and carpentered, and schemed, and performed more miracles there by yourself than all the saints in paradise. Ah! you annoyed me enough once with your bagpipe. They call it a biniou in Brittany. Always the same tune too, silly fellow. And yet you don't love Déruchette? I don't know what is the matter with you. I recollect it all now. I was there in the corner; Déruchette said, 'He shall be my husband;' and so you shall. You don't love her! Either you must be mad, or else I am mad. And you stand there, and speak not a word. I tell you you are not at liberty to do all the things you have done, and then say, after all, 'I don't love Déruchette.' People don't do others services in order to put them in a passion. Well; if you don't marry her, she shall be single all her life. In the first place, I shall want you. You must be the pilot of the Durande. Do you imagine I mean to part with you like that? No, no, my brave boy; I don't let you go. I have got you now; I'll not even listen to you. Where will they find a sailor like you? You are

the man I want. But why don't you speak?"

Meanwhile the harbour bell had aroused the household and the neighbourhood. Douce and Grace had risen, and had just entered the lower room, silent and astonished. Grace had a candle in her hand. A group of neighbours, townspeople, sailors, and peasants, who had rushed out of their houses, were outside on the quay, gazing in wonderment at the funnel of the Durande in the sloop. Some, hearing Lethierry's voice in the lower room, began to glide in by the half-opened door. Between the faces of two worthy old women appeared that of Sieur Landoys, who had the good fortune always to find himself where he would have regretted to have been absent.

Men feel a satisfaction in having witnesses of their joys. The sort of scattered support which a crowd presents pleases them at such times; their delight draws new life from it. Mess Lethierry suddenly perceived that there were persons about him; and he welcomed the audience at once.

"Ah! you are here, my friends? I am very glad to see you. You know the news? That man has been there, and brought it back. How d'ye do, Sieur Landoys? When I woke up just now, the first thing I spied was the funnel. It was under my window. There's not a nail missing. They make pictures of Napoleon's deeds; but I think more of that than of the battle of Austerlitz. You have just left your beds, my good friends. The Durande has found you sleeping. While you are putting on your night-caps and blowing out your candles there are others working like heroes. We are a set of cowards and do-nothings; we sit at home rubbing our

rheumatisms; but happily that does not prevent there being some of another stamp. The man of the Bû de la Rue has arrived from the Douvres rocks. He has fished up the Durande from the bottom of the sea; and fished up my money out of Clubin's pocket, from a greater depth still. But how did you contrive to do it? All the powers of darkness were against you--the wind and the sea--the sea and the wind. It's true enough that you are a magician. Those who say that are not so stupid after all. The Durande is back again. The tempests may rage now; that cuts the ground from under them. My friends, I can inform you that there was no shipwreck after all. I have examined all the machinery. It is like new, perfect. The valves go as easily as rollers. You would think them made yesterday. You know that the waste water is carried away by a tube inside another tube, through which come the waters from the boilers; this was to economise the heat. Well; the two tubes are there as good as ever. The complete engine, in fact. She is all there, her wheels and all. Ah! you shall marry her."

"Marry the complete engine?" asked Sieur Landoys.

"No; Déruchette; yes; the engine. Both of them. He shall be my double son-in-law. He shall be her captain. Good day, Captain Gilliatt; for there will soon be a captain of the Durande. We are going to do a world of business again. There will be trade, circulation, cargoes of oxen and sheep. I wouldn't give St. Sampson for London now. And there stands the author of all this. It was a curious adventure, I can tell you. You will read about it on Saturday in old Mauger's Gazette. Malicious Gilliatt is very malicious. What's the meaning of these Louis-d'ors here?"

Mess Lethierry had just observed, through the opening of the lid, that there was some gold in the box upon the notes. He seized it, opened and emptied it into the palm of his hand, and put the handful of guineas on the table.

"For the poor, Sieur Landoys. Give those sovereigns from me to the constable of St. Sampson. You recollect Rantaine's letter. I showed it to you. Very well; I've got the bank-notes. Now we can buy some oak and fir, and go to work at carpentering. Look you! Do you remember the weather of three days ago? What a hurricane of wind and rain! Gilliatt endured all that upon the Douvres. That didn't prevent his taking the wreck to pieces, as I might take my watch. Thanks to him, I am on my legs again. Old 'Lethierry's galley' is going to run again, ladies and gentlemen. A nut-shell with a couple of wheels and a funnel. I always had that idea. I used to say to myself, one day I will do it. That was a good long time back. It was an idea that came in my head at Paris, at the coffee-house at the corner of the Rue Christine and the Rue Dauphine, when I was reading a paper which had an account of it. Do you know that Gilliatt would think nothing of putting the machine at Marly in his pocket, and walking about with it? He is wrought-iron, that man; tempered steel, a mariner of invaluable qualities, an excellent smith, an extraordinary fellow, more astonishing than the Prince of Hohenlohe. That is what I call a man with brains. We are children by the side of him. Sea-wolves we may think ourselves; but the sea-lion is there. Hurrah for Gilliatt! I do not know how he has done it; but certainly he must have been the devil. And how can I do other than give him

Déruchette."

For some minutes Déruchette had been in the room. She had not spoken or moved since she entered. She had glided in like a shadow, had sat down almost unperceived behind Mess Lethierry, who stood before her, loquacious, stormy, joyful, abounding in gestures, and talking in a loud voice. A little while after her another silent apparition had appeared. A man attired in black, with a white cravat, holding his hat in his hand, stood in the doorway. There were now several candles among the group, which had gradually increased in number. These lights were near the man attired in black. His profile and youthful and pleasing complexion showed itself against the dark background with the clearness of an engraving on a medal. He leaned with his shoulder against the framework of the door, and held his left hand to his forehead, an attitude of unconscious grace, which contrasted the breadth of his forehead with the smallness of his hand. There was an expression of anguish in his contracted lips, as he looked on and listened with profound attention. The standers-by having recognised M. Caudray, the rector of the parish, had fallen back to allow him to pass; but he remained upon the threshold. There was hesitation in his posture, but decision in his looks, which now and then met those of Déruchette. With regard to Gilliatt, whether by chance or design, he was in shadow, and was only perceived indistinctly.

At first Mess Lethierry did not observe Caudray, but he saw Déruchette. He went to her and kissed her fervently upon the forehead; stretching forth his hand at the same time towards the dark corner where Gilliatt

was standing.

"Déruchette," he said, "we are rich again; and there is your future husband."

Déruchette raised her head, and looked into the dusky corner bewildered.

Mess Lethierry continued:

"The marriage shall take place immediately, if it can; they shall have a licence; the formalities here are not very troublesome; the dean can do what he pleases; people are married before they have time to turn round. It is not as in France, where you must have bans, and publications, and delays, and all that fuss. You will be able to boast of being the wife of a brave man. No one can say he is not. I thought so from the day when I saw him come back from Herm with the little cannon. But now he comes back from the Douvres with his fortune and mine, and the fortune of this country. A man of whom the world will talk a great deal more one day. You said once, 'I will marry him;' and you shall marry him, and you shall have little children, and I will be grandpapa; and you will have the good fortune to be the wife of a noble fellow, who can work, who can be useful to his fellow-men; a surprising fellow, worth a hundred others; a man who can rescue other people's inventions, a providence! At all events, you will not have married, like so many other silly girls about here, a soldier or a priest, that is, a man who kills or a man who lies. But what are you doing there, Gilliatt? Nobody can see you. Douce, Grace, everybody there! Bring a light, I say. Light up my son-in-law for

me. I betroth you to each other, my children: here stands your husband, here my son, Gilliatt of the Bû de la Rue, that noble fellow, that great seaman; I will have no other son-in-law, and you no other husband. I pledge my word to that once more in God's name. Ah! you are there, Monsieur the Curé. You will marry these young people for us."

Lethierry's eye had just fallen upon Caudray.

Douce and Grace had done as they were directed. Two candles placed upon the table cast a light upon Gilliatt from head to foot.

"There's a fine fellow," said Mess Lethierry.

Gilliatt's appearance was hideous.

He was in the condition in which he had that morning set sail from the rocks; in rags, his bare elbows showing through his sleeves; his beard long, his hair rough and wild; his eyes bloodshot, his skin peeling, his hands covered with wounds; his feet naked. Some of the blisters left by the devil-fish were still visible upon his arms.

Lethierry gazed at him.

"This is my son-in-law," he said. "How he has struggled with the sea. He is all in rags. What shoulders; what hands. There's a splendid fellow!"

Grace ran to Déruchette and supported her head. She had fainted.

II

THE LEATHERN TRUNK

At break of day St. Sampson was on foot, and all the people of St. Peter's Port began to flock there. The resurrection of the Durande caused a commotion in the island not unlike what was caused by the Salette in the south of France. There was a crowd on the quay staring at the funnel standing erect in the sloop. They were anxious to see and handle the machinery; but Lethierry, after making a new and triumphant survey of the whole by daylight, had placed two sailors aboard with instructions to prevent any one approaching it. The funnel, however, furnished food enough for contemplation. The crowd gaped with astonishment. They talked of nothing but Gilliatt. They remarked on his surname of "malicious Gilliatt;" and their admiration wound up with the remark, "It is not pleasant to have people in the island who can do things like that."

Mess Lethierry was seen from outside the house, seated at a table before the window, writing, with one eye on the paper and another on the sloop. He was so completely absorbed that he had only once stopped to call Douce and ask after Déruchette. Douce replied, "Mademoiselle has risen and is gone out." Mess Lethierry replied, "She is right to take the air. She was a little unwell last night, owing to the heat. There was a crowd in the room. This and her surprise and joy, and the windows being all

closed, overcame her. She will have a husband to be proud of." And he had gone on with his writing. He had already finished and sealed two letters, addressed to the most important shipbuilders at Brême. He now finished the sealing of a third.

The noise of a wheel upon the quay induced him to look up. He leaned out of the window, and observed coming from the path which led to the Bû de la Rue a boy pushing a wheelbarrow. The boy was going towards St. Peter's Port. In the barrow was a portmanteau of brown leather, studded with nails of brass and white metal.

Mess Lethierry called to the boy:

"Where are you going, my lad?"

The boy stopped, and replied:

"To the Cashmere."

"What for?"

"To take this trunk aboard."

"Very good; you shall take these three letters too."

Mess Lethierry opened the drawer of his table, took a piece of string, tied the three letters which he had just written across and across, and

threw the packet to the boy, who caught it between his hands.

"Tell the captain of the Cashmere they are my letters, and to take care of them. They are for Germany--Brême viâ London."

"I can't speak to the captain, Mess Lethierry."

"Why not?"

"The Cashmere is not at the quay."

"Ah!"

"She is in the roads."

"Ay, true; on account of the sea."

"I can only speak to the man who takes the things aboard."

"You will tell him, then, to look to the letters."

"Very well, Mess Lethierry."

"At what time does the Cashmere sail?"

"At twelve."

"The tide will flow at noon; she will have it against her."

"But she will have the wind," answered the lad.

"Boy," said Mess Lethierry, pointing with his forefinger at the engine in the sloop, "do you see that? There is something which laughs at winds and tides."

The boy put the letters in his pocket, took up the handles of the barrow again, and went on his way towards the town. Mess Lethierry called "Douce! Grace!"

Grace opened the door a little way.

"What is it, Mess?"

"Come in and wait a moment."

Mess Lethierry took a sheet of paper, and began to write. If Grace, standing behind him, had been curious, and had leaned forward while he was writing, she might have read as follows:--

"I have written to Brême for the timber. I have appointments all the morning with carpenters for the estimate. The rebuilding will go on fast. You must go yourself to the Deanery for a licence. It is my wish that the marriage should take place as soon as possible; immediately would be better. I am busy about the Durande. Do you be busy about

Déruchette."

He dated it and signed "Lethierry." He did not take the trouble to seal it, but merely folded it in four, and handed it to Grace, saying:

"Take that to Gilliatt."

"To the Bû de la Rue?"

"To the Bû de la Rue."

BOOK III

THE DEPARTURE OF THE CASHMERE

I

THE HAVELET NEAR THE CHURCH

When there is a crowd at St. Sampson, St. Peter's Port is soon deserted. A point of curiosity at a given place is like an air-pump. News travel fast in small places. Going to see the funnel of the Durande under Mess Lethierry's window had been, since sunrise, the business of the Guernsey folks. Every other event was eclipsed by this. The death of the Dean of St. Asaph was forgotten, together with the question of the Rev. Mr. Caudray, his sudden riches, and the departure of the Cashmere. The machinery of the Durande brought back from the Douvres rocks was the order of the day. People were incredulous. The shipwreck had appeared extraordinary, the salvage seemed impossible. Everybody hastened to assure himself of the truth by the help of his own eyes. Business of every kind was suspended. Long strings of townsfolk with their families, from the "Vesin" up to the "Mess," men and women, gentlemen, mothers with children, infants with dolls, were coming by every road or pathway

to see "the thing to be seen" at the Bravées, turning their backs upon St. Peter's Port. Many shops at St. Peter's Port were closed. In the Commercial Arcade there was an absolute stagnation in buying and selling. The Durande alone obtained attention. Not a single shopkeeper had had a "handsell" that morning, except a jeweller, who was surprised at having sold a wedding-ring to "a sort of man who appeared in a great hurry, and who asked for the house of the Dean." The shops which remained open were centres of gossip, where loiterers discussed the miraculous salvage. There was not a foot-passenger at the "Hyvreuse," which is known in these days, nobody knows why, as Cambridge Park; no one was in the High Street, then called the Grande Rue; nor in Smith Street, known then only as the Rue des Forges; nobody in Hauteville. The Esplanade itself was deserted. One might have guessed it to be Sunday. A visit from a Royal personage to review the militia at the Ancresse could not have emptied the town more completely. All this hubbub about "a nobody" like Gilliatt, caused a good deal of shrugging of the shoulders among persons of grave and correct habits.

The church of St. Peter's Port, with its three gable-ends placed side by side, its transept and its steeple, stands at the water's side at the end of the harbour, and nearly on the landing place itself, where it welcomes those who arrive, and gives the departing "God speed." It represents the capital letter at the beginning of that long line which forms the front of the town towards the sea.

It is both the parish church of St. Peter's Port and the chief place of the Deanery of the whole island. Its officiating minister is the

surrogate of the bishop, a clergyman in full orders.

The harbour of St. Peter's Port, a very fine and large port at the present day, was at that epoch, and even up to ten years ago, less considerable than the harbour of St. Sampson. It was enclosed by two enormous thick walls, beginning at the water's edge on both sides, and curving till they almost joined again at the extremities, where there stood a little white lighthouse. Under this lighthouse, a narrow gullet, bearing still the two rings of the chain with which it was the custom to bar the passage in ancient times, formed the entrance for vessels. The harbour of St. Peter's Port might be well compared with the claws of a huge lobster opened a little way. This kind of pincers took from the ocean a portion of the sea, which it compelled to remain calm. But during the easterly winds the waves rolled heavily against the narrow entrance, the port was agitated, and it was better not to enter. This is what had happened with the Cashmere that day, which had accordingly anchored in the roads.

The vessels, during the easterly winds, preferred this course, which besides saved them the port dues. On these occasions the boatmen of the town, a hardy race of mariners whom the new port has thrown out of employment, came in their boats to fetch passengers at the landing-place or at stations on the shore, and carried them with their luggage, often in heavy seas, but always without accident, to the vessels about to sail. The east wind blows off the shore, and is very favourable for the passage to England; the vessel at such times rolls, but does not pitch.

When a vessel happened to be in the port, everybody embarked from the quay. When it was in the roads they took their choice, and embarked from any point of the coast near the moorings. The "Havelet" was one of these creeks. This little harbour (which is the signification of the word) was near the town, but was so solitary that it seemed far off. This solitude was owing to the shelter of the high cliffs of Fort St. George, which overlooked this retired inlet. The Havelet was accessible by several paths. The most direct was along the water's side. It had the advantage of leading to the town and to the church in five minutes' walk, and the disadvantage of being covered by the sea twice a day. The other paths were more or less abrupt, and led down to the creek through gaps in the steep rocks. Even in broad daylight, it was dusk in the Havelet. Huge blocks overhanging it on all sides, and thick bushes and brambles cast a sort of soft twilight upon the rocks and waves below. Nothing could be more peaceful than this spot in calm weather; nothing more tumultuous during heavy seas. There were ends of branches there which were always wet with the foam. In the spring time, the place was full of flowers, of nests, of perfumes, of birds, of butterflies, and bees. Thanks to recent improvements, this wild nook no longer exists. Fine, straight lines have taken the place of these wild features; masonry, quays, and little gardens, have made their appearance; earthwork has been the rage, and taste has finally subdued the eccentricities of the cliff, and the irregularities of the rocks below.

II

DESPAIR CONFRONTS DESPAIR

It was a little before ten o'clock in the morning. The crowd at St. Sampson, according to all appearance, was increasing. The multitude, feverish with curiosity, was moving towards the north; and the Havelet, which is in the south, was more deserted than ever.

Notwithstanding this, there was a boat there and a boatman. In the boat was a travelling bag. The boatman seemed to be waiting for some one.

The Cashmere was visible at anchor in roads, as she did not start till midday; there was as yet no sign of moving aboard.

A passer-by, who had listened from one of the ladder-paths up the cliffs overhead, would have heard a murmur of words in the Havelet, and if he had leaned over the overhanging cliff might have seen, at some distance from the boat, in a corner among the rocks and branches, where the eye of the boatman could not reach them, a man and a woman. It was Caudray and Déruchette.

These obscure nooks on the seashore, the chosen places of lady bathers, are not always so solitary as is believed. Persons are sometimes observed and heard there. Those who seek shelter and solitude in them

may easily be followed through the thick bushes, and, thanks to the multiplicity and entanglement of the paths, the granite and the shrubs which favour the stolen interview may also favour the witness.

Caudray and Déruchette stood face to face, looking into each other's eyes, and holding each other by the hand. Déruchette was speaking. Caudray was silent. A tear that had gathered upon his eyelash hung there and did not fall.

Grief and strong passion were imprinted in his calm, religious countenance. A painful resignation was there too--a resignation hostile to faith, though springing from it. Upon that face, simply devout until then, there was the commencement of a fatal expression. He who had hitherto meditated only on doctrine, had begun to meditate on Fate, an unhealthy meditation for a priest. Faith dissolves under its action. Nothing disturbs the religious mind more than that bending under the weight of the unknown. Life seems a perpetual succession of events, to which man submits. We never know from which direction the sudden blow will come. Misery and happiness enter or make their exit, like unexpected guests. Their laws, their orbit, their principle of gravitation, are beyond man's grasp. Virtue conducts not to happiness, nor crime to retribution: conscience has one logic, fate another; and neither coincide. Nothing is foreseen. We live confusedly, and from hand to mouth. Conscience is the straight line, life is the whirlwind, which creates above man's head either black chaos or the blue sky. Fate does not practise the art of gradations. Her wheel turns sometimes so fast that we can scarcely distinguish the interval between one revolution and

another, or the link between yesterday and to-day. Caudray was a believer whose faith did not exclude reason, and whose priestly training did not shut him out from passion. Those religious systems which impose celibacy on the priesthood are not without reason for it. Nothing really destroys the individuality of the priest more than love. All sorts of clouds seemed to darken Caudray's soul. He looked too long into Déruchette's eyes. These two beings worshipped each other.

There was in Caudray's eye the mute adoration of despair.

Déruchette spoke.

"You must not leave me. I shall not have strength. I thought I could bid you farewell. I cannot. Why did you come yesterday? You should not have come if you were going so soon. I never spoke to you. I loved you; but knew it not. Only that day, when M. Hérode read to us the story of Rebecca, and when your eyes met mine, my cheeks were like fire, and I thought only of how Rebecca's face must have burnt like mine; and yet, if any one had told me yesterday that I loved you, I might have laughed at it. This is what is so terrible. It has been like a treason. I did not take heed. I went to the church, I saw you, I thought everybody there was like myself. I do not reproach you; you did nothing to make me love you; you did nothing but look at me; it is not your fault if you look at people; and yet that made me love you so much. I did not even suspect it. When you took up the book it was a flood of light; when others took it, it was but a book. You raised your eyes sometimes; you spoke of archangels; oh! you were my archangel. What you said penetrated

my thoughts at once. Before then, I know not even whether I believed in God. Since I have known you, I have learnt to pray. I used to say to Douce, dress me quickly, lest I should be late at the service; and I hastened to the church. Such it was with me to love some one. I did not know the cause. I said to myself, how devout I am becoming. It is from you that I have learnt that I do not go to church for God's service. It is true; I went for your sake. You spoke so well, and when you raised your arms to heaven, you seemed to hold my heart within your two white hands. I was foolish; but I did not know it. Shall I tell you your fault? It was your coming to me in the garden; it was your speaking to me. If you had said nothing, I should have known nothing. If you had gone, I should, perhaps, have been sad, but now I should die. Since I know that I love you, you cannot leave me. Of what are you thinking? You do not seem to listen to me."

Caudray replied:

"You heard what was said last night?"

"Ah, me!"

"What can I do against that?"

They were silent for a moment. Caudray continued:

"There is but one duty left to me. It is to depart."

"And mine to die. Oh! how I wish there was no sea, but only sky. It seems to me as if that would settle all, and that our departure would be the same. It was wrong to speak to me; why did you speak to me? Do not go. What will become of me? I tell you I shall die. You will be far off when I shall be in my grave. Oh! my heart will break. I am very wretched; yet my uncle is not unkind."

It was the first time in her life that Déruchette had ever said "my uncle." Until then she had always said "my father."

Caudray stepped back, and made a sign to the boatman. Déruchette heard the sound of the boat-hook among the shingle, and the step of the man on the gunwale of the boat.

"No! no!" cried Déruchette.

"It must be, Déruchette," replied Caudray.

"No! never! For the sake of an engine--impossible. Did you see that horrible man last night? You cannot abandon me thus. You are wise; you can find a means. It is impossible that you bade me come here this morning with the idea of leaving me. I have never done anything to deserve this; you can have no reproach to make me. Is it by that vessel that you intended to sail? I will not let you go. You shall not leave me. Heaven does not open thus to close so soon. I know you will remain. Besides, it is not yet time. Oh! how I love you."

And pressing closely to him, she interlaced the fingers of each hand behind his neck, as if partly to make a bond of her two arms for detaining him, and partly with her joined hands to pray. He moved away this gentle restraint, while Déruchette resisted as long as she could.

Déruchette sank upon a projection of the rock covered with ivy, lifting by an unconscious movement the sleeve of her dress up to the elbow, and exhibiting her graceful arm. A pale suffused light was in her eyes. The boat was approaching.

Caudray held her head between his hands. He touched her hair with a sort of religious care, fixed his eyes upon her for some moments, then kissed her on the forehead fervently, and in an accent trembling with anguish, and in which might have been traced the uprooting of his soul, he uttered the word which has so often resounded in the depths of the human heart, "Farewell!"

Déruchette burst into loud sobs.

At this moment they heard a voice near them, which said solemnly and deliberately:

"Why should you not be man and wife?"

Caudray raised his head. Déruchette looked up.

Gilliatt stood before them.

He had approached by a bye-path.

He was no longer the same man that he had appeared on the previous night. He had arranged his hair, shaved his beard, put on shoes, and a white shirt, with a large collar turned over, sailor fashion. He wore a sailor's costume, but all was new. A gold ring was on his little finger. He seemed profoundly calm. His sunburnt skin had become pale: a hue of sickly bronze overspread it.

They looked at him astonished. Though so changed, Déruchette recognised him. But the words which he had spoken were so far from what was passing in their minds at that moment, that they had left no distinct impression.

Gilliatt spoke again:

"Why should you say farewell? Be man and wife, and go together."

Déruchette started. A trembling seized her from head to foot.

Gilliatt continued:

"Miss Lethierry is a woman. She is of age. It depends only on herself. Her uncle is but her uncle. You love each other----"

Déruchette interrupted in a gentle voice, and asked, "How came you

here?"

"Make yourselves one," repeated Gilliatt.

Déruchette began to have a sense of the meaning of his words. She stammered out:

"My poor uncle!"

"If the marriage was yet to be," said Gilliatt, "he would refuse. When it is over he will consent. Besides, you are going to leave here. When you return he will forgive."

Gilliatt added, with a slight touch of bitterness, "And then he is thinking of nothing just now but the rebuilding of his boat. This will occupy his mind during your absence. The Durande will console him."

"I cannot," said Déruchette, in a state of stupor which was not without its gleam of joy. "I must not leave him unhappy."

"It will be but for a short time," answered Gilliatt.

Caudray and Déruchette had been, as it were, bewildered. They recovered themselves now. The meaning of Gilliatt's words became plainer as their surprise diminished. There was a slight cloud still before them; but their part was not to resist. We yield easily to those who come to save. Objections to a return into Paradise are weak. There was something

in the attitude of Déruchette, as she leaned imperceptibly upon her lover, which seemed to make common cause with Gilliatt's words. The enigma of the presence of this man, and of his utterances, which, in the mind of Déruchette in particular, produced various kinds of astonishment, was a thing apart. He said to them, "Be man and wife!" This was clear; if there was responsibility, it was his. Déruchette had a confused feeling that, for many reasons, he had the right to decide upon her fate. Caudray murmured, as if plunged in thought, "An uncle is not a father."

His resolution was corrupted by the sudden and happy turn in his ideas. The probable scruples of the clergyman melted, and dissolved in his heart's love for Déruchette.

Gilliatt's tone became abrupt and harsh, and like the pulsations of fever.

"There must be no delay," he said. "You have time, but that is all. Come."

Caudray observed him attentively; and suddenly exclaimed:

"I recognise you. It was you who saved my life."

Gilliatt replied:

"I think not."

"Yonder," said Caudray, "at the extremity of the Banques."

"I do not know the place," said Gilliatt.

"It was on the very day that I arrived here."

"Let us lose no time," interrupted Gilliatt.

"And if I am not deceived, you are the man whom we met last night."

"Perhaps."

"What is your name?"

Gilliatt raised his voice:

"Boatman! wait there for us. We shall return soon. You asked me, Miss Lethierry, how I came to be here. The answer is very simple. I walked behind you. You are twenty-one. In this country, when persons are of age, and depend only on themselves, they may be married immediately. Let us take the path along the water-side. It is passable; the tide will not rise here till noon. But lose no time. Come with me."

Déruchette and Caudray seemed to consult each other by a glance. They were standing close together motionless. They were intoxicated with joy. There are strange hesitations sometimes on the edge of the abyss of

happiness. They understood, as it were, without understanding.

"His name is Gilliatt," whispered Déruchette.

Gilliatt interrupted them with a sort of tone of authority.

"What do you linger for?" he asked. "I tell you to follow me."

"Whither?" asked Caudray.

"There!"

And Gilliatt pointed with his finger towards the spire of the church.

Gilliatt walked on before, and they followed him. His step was firm; but they walked unsteadily.

As they approached the church, an expression dawned upon those two pure and beautiful countenances, which was soon to become a smile. The approach to the church lighted them up. In the hollow eyes of Gilliatt there was the darkness of night. The beholder might have imagined that he saw a spectre leading two souls to Paradise.

Caudray and Déruchette scarcely took count of what had happened. The interposition of this man was like the branch clutched at by the drowning. They followed their guide with the docility of despair, leaning on the first comer. Those who feel themselves near death easily

accept the accident which seems to save. Déruchette, more ignorant of life, was more confident. Caudray was thoughtful. Déruchette was of age, it was true. The English formalities of marriage are simple, especially in primitive parts, where the clergyman has almost a discretionary power; but would the Dean consent to celebrate the marriage without even inquiring whether the uncle consented? This was the question. Nevertheless, they could learn. In any case there would be but a delay.

But what was this man? and if it was really he whom Lethierry the night before had declared should be his son-in-law, what could be the meaning of his actions? The very obstacle itself had become a providence. Caudray yielded; but his yielding was only the rapid and tacit assent of a man who feels himself saved from despair.

The pathway was uneven, and sometimes wet and difficult to pass. Caudray, absorbed in thought, did not observe the occasional pools of water or the heaps of shingle. But from time to time Gilliatt turned and said to him, "Take heed of those stones. Give her your hand."

III

THE FORETHOUGHT OF SELF-SACRIFICE

It struck ten as they entered the church.

By reason of the early hour, and also on account of the desertion of the town that day, the church was empty.

At the farther end, however, near the table which in the reformed church fulfils the place of the altar, there were three persons. They were the Dean, his evangelist, and the registrar. The Dean, who was the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode, was seated; the evangelist and the registrar stood beside him.

A book was open upon the table.

Beside him, upon a credence-table, was another book. It was the parish register, and also open; and an attentive eye might have remarked a page on which was some writing, of which the ink was not yet dry. By the side of the register were a pen and a writing-desk.

The Reverend Jaquemin Hérode rose on perceiving Caudray.

"I have been expecting you," he said. "All is ready."

The Dean, in fact, wore his officiating robes.

Caudray looked towards Gilliatt.

The Reverend Doctor added, "I am at your service, brother;" and he bowed.

It was a bow which neither turned to right or left. It was evident from the direction of the Dean's gaze that he did not recognise the existence of any one but Caudray, for Caudray was a clergyman and a gentleman. Neither Déruchette, who stood aside, nor Gilliatt, who was in the rear, were included in the salutation. His look was a sort of parenthesis in which none but Caudray were admitted. The observance of these little niceties constitutes an important feature in the maintenance of order and the preservation of society.

The Dean continued, with a graceful and dignified urbanity:

"I congratulate you, my colleague, from a double point of view. You have lost your uncle, and are about to take a wife; you are blessed with riches on the one hand, and happiness on the other. Moreover, thanks to the boat which they are about to rebuild, Mess Lethierry will also be rich; which is as it should be. Miss Lethierry was born in this parish; I have verified the date of her birth in the register. She is of age, and at her own disposal. Her uncle, too, who is her only relative, consents. You are anxious to be united immediately on account of your

approaching departure. This I can understand; but this being the marriage of the rector of the parish, I should have been gratified to have seen it associated with a little more solemnity. I will consult your wishes by not detaining you longer than necessary. The essentials will be soon complied with. The form is already drawn up in the register, and it requires only the names to be filled in. By the terms of the law and custom, the marriage may be celebrated immediately after the inscription. The declaration necessary for the licence has been duly made. I take upon myself a slight irregularity; for the application for the licence ought to have been registered seven days in advance; but I yield to necessity and the urgency of your departure. Be it so, then. I will proceed with the ceremony. My evangelist will be the witness for the bridegroom; as regards the witness for the bride----"

The Dean turned towards Gilliatt. Gilliatt made a movement of his head.

"That is sufficient," said the Dean.

Caudray remained motionless; Déruchette was happy, but no less powerless to move.

"Nevertheless," continued the Dean, "there is still an obstacle."

Déruchette started.

The Dean continued:

"The representative here present of Mess Lethierry applied for the licence for you, and has signed the declaration on the register." And with the thumb of his left hand the Dean pointed to Gilliatt, which prevented the necessity of his remembering his name. "The messenger from Mess Lethierry," he added, "has informed me this morning that being too much occupied to come in person, Mess Lethierry desired that the marriage should take place immediately. This desire, expressed verbally, is not sufficient. In consequence of having to grant the licence, and of the irregularity which I take upon myself, I cannot proceed so rapidly without informing myself from Mess Lethierry personally, unless some one can produce his signature. Whatever might be my desire to serve you, I cannot be satisfied with a mere message. I must have some written document."

"That need not delay us," said Gilliatt. And he presented a paper to the Dean. The Dean took it, perused it by a glance, seemed to pass over some lines as unimportant, and read aloud: "Go to the Dean for the licence. I wish the marriage to take place as soon as possible. Immediately would be better."

He placed the paper on the table, and proceeded:

"It is signed, Lethierry. It would have been more respectful to have addressed himself to me. But since I am called on to serve a colleague, I ask no more."

Caudray glanced again at Gilliatt. There are moments when mind and mind

comprehend each other. Caudray felt that there was some deception; he had not the strength of purpose, perhaps he had not the idea of revealing it. Whether in obedience to a latent heroism, of which he had begun to obtain a glimpse; or whether from a deadening of the conscience, arising from the suddenness of the happiness placed within his reach, he uttered no word.

The Dean took the pen, and aided by the clerk, filled up the spaces in the page of the register; then he rose, and by a gesture invited Caudray and Déruchette to approach the table.

The ceremony commenced. It was a strange moment. Caudray and Déruchette stood beside each other before the minister. He who has ever dreamed of a marriage in which he himself was chief actor, may conceive something of the feeling which they experienced.

Gilliatt stood at a little distance in the shadow of the pillars.

Déruchette, on rising in the morning, desperate, thinking only of death and its associations, had dressed herself in white. Her attire, which had been associated in her mind with mourning, was suited to her nuptials. A white dress is all that is necessary for the bride.

A ray of happiness was visible upon her face. Never had she appeared more beautiful. Her features were remarkable for prettiness rather than what is called beauty. Their fault, if fault it be, lay in a certain excess of grace. Déruchette in repose, that is, neither disturbed by

passion or grief, was graceful above all. The ideal virgin is the transfiguration of a face like this. Déruchette, touched by her sorrow and her love, seemed to have caught that higher and more holy expression. It was the difference between the field daisy and the lily.

The tears had scarcely dried upon her cheeks; one perhaps still lingered in the midst of her smiles. Traces of tears indistinctly visible form a pleasing but sombre accompaniment of joy.

The Dean, standing near the table, placed his finger upon the open book, and asked in a distinct voice whether they knew of any impediment to their union.

There was no reply.

"Amen!" said the Dean.

Caudray and Déruchette advanced a step or two towards the table.

"Joseph Ebenezer Caudray, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?"

Caudray replied "I will."

The Dean continued:

"Durande Déruchette Lethierry, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded

husband?"

Déruchette, in an agony of soul, springing from her excess of happiness, murmured rather than uttered--

"I will."

Then followed the beautiful form of the Anglican marriage service. The Dean looked around, and in the twilight of the church uttered the solemn words:

"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"

Gilliatt answered, "I do!"

There was an interval of silence. Caudray and Déruchette felt a vague sense of oppression in spite of their joy.

The Dean placed Déruchette's right hand in Caudray's; and Caudray repeated after him:

"I take thee, Durande Déruchette to be my wedded wife, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death do us part; and thereto I plight thee my troth."

The Dean then placed Caudray's right hand in that of Déruchette, and Déruchette said after him:

"I take thee to be my wedded husband for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish till death do us part; and thereto I plight thee my troth."

The Dean asked, "Where is the ring?" The question took them by surprise. Caudray had no ring; but Gilliatt took off the gold ring which he wore upon his little finger. It was probably the wedding-ring which had been sold that morning by the jeweller in the Commercial Arcade.

The Dean placed the ring upon the book; then handed it to Caudray, who took Déruchette's little trembling left hand, passed the ring over her fourth finger, and said:

"With this ring I thee wed!"

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," continued the Dean.

"Amen," said his evangelist.

Then the Dean said, "Let us pray."

Caudray and Déruchette turned towards the table, and knelt down.

Gilliatt, standing by, inclined his head.

So they knelt before God; while he seemed to bend under the burden of his fate.

IV

FOR YOUR WIFE: WHEN YOU MARRY

As they left the church they could see the Cashmere making preparations for her departure.

"You are in time," said Gilliatt.

They chose again the path leading to the Havelet.

Caudray and Déruchette went before, Gilliatt this time walking behind them. They were two somnambulists. Their bewilderment had not passed away, but only changed in form. They took no heed of whither they were going, or of what they did. They hurried on mechanically, scarcely remembering the existence of anything, feeling that they were united for ever, but scarcely able to connect two ideas in their minds. In ecstasy like theirs it is as impossible to think as it is to swim in a torrent. In the midst of their trouble and darkness they had been plunged in a whirlpool of delight; they bore a paradise within themselves. They did not speak, but conversed with each other by the mysterious sympathy of their souls. Déruchette pressed Caudray's arm to her side.

The footsteps of Gilliatt behind them reminded them now and then that he was there. They were deeply moved, but could find no words. The excess

of emotion results in stupor. Theirs was delightful, but overwhelming. They were man and wife: every other idea was postponed to that. What Gilliatt had done was well; that was all that they could grasp. They experienced towards their guide a deep but vague gratitude in their hearts. Déruchette felt that there was some mystery to be explained, but not now. Meanwhile they accepted their unexpected happiness. They felt themselves controlled by the abruptness and decision of this man who conferred on them so much happiness with a kind of authority. To question him, to talk with him seemed impossible. Too many impressions rushed into their minds at once for that. Their absorption was pardonable.

Events succeed each other sometimes with the rapidity of hailstones. Their effect is overpowering; they deaden the senses. Falling upon existences habitually calm, they render incidents rapidly unintelligible even to those whom they chiefly concern; we become scarcely conscious of our own adventures; we are overwhelmed without guessing the cause, or crowned with happiness without comprehending it. For some hours Déruchette had been subjected to every kind of emotion: at first, surprise and delight at meeting Caudray in the garden; then horror at the monster whom her uncle had presented as her husband; then her anguish when the angel of her dreams spread his wings and seemed about to depart; and now her joy, a joy such as she had never known before, founded on an inexplicable enigma; the monster of last night himself restoring her lover; marriage arising out of her torture; this Gilliatt, the evil destiny of last night, become to-day her saviour! She could explain nothing to her own mind. It was evident that all the morning

Gilliatt had had no other occupation than that of preparing the way for their marriage: he had done all: he had answered for Mess Lethierry, seen the Dean, obtained the licence, signed the necessary declaration; and thus the marriage had been rendered possible. But Déruchette understood it not. If she had, she could not have comprehended the reasons. They did nothing but close their eyes to the world, and--grateful in their hearts--yield themselves up to the guidance of this good demon. There was no time for explanations, and expressions of gratitude seemed too insignificant. They were silent in their trance of love.

The little power of thought which they retained was scarcely more than sufficient to guide them on their way--to enable them to distinguish the sea from the land, and the Cashmere from every other vessel.

In a few minutes they were at the little creek.

Caudray entered the boat first. At the moment when Déruchette was about to follow, she felt her sleeve held gently. It was Gilliatt, who had placed his finger upon a fold of her dress.

"Madam," he said, "you are going on a journey unexpectedly. It has struck me that you would have need of dresses and clothes. You will find a trunk aboard the Cashmere, containing a lady's clothing. It came to me from my mother. It was intended for my wife if I should marry. Permit me to ask your acceptance of it."

Déruchette, partially aroused from her dream, turned towards him. Gilliatt continued, in a voice which was scarcely audible:

"I do not wish to detain you, madam, but I feel that I ought to give you some explanation. On the day of your misfortune, you were sitting in the lower room; you uttered certain words; it is easy to understand that you have forgotten them. We are not compelled to remember every word we speak. Mess Lethierry was in great sorrow. It was certainly a noble vessel, and one that did good service. The misfortune was recent; there was a great commotion. Those are things which one naturally forgets. It was only a vessel wrecked among the rocks; one cannot be always thinking of an accident. But what I wished to tell you was, that as it was said that no one would go, I went. They said it was impossible; but it was not. I thank you for listening to me a moment. You can understand, madam, that if I went there, it was not with the thought of displeasing you. This is a thing, besides, of old date. I know that you are in haste. If there was time, if we could talk about this, you might perhaps remember. But this is all useless now. The history of it goes back to a day when there was snow upon the ground. And then on one occasion that I passed you, I thought that you looked kindly on me. This is how it was. With regard to last night, I had not had time to go to my home. I came from my labour; I was all torn and ragged; I startled you, and you fainted. I was to blame; people do not come like that to strangers' houses; I ask your forgiveness. This is nearly all I had to say. You are about to sail. You will have fine weather; the wind is in the east. Farewell. You will not blame me for troubling you with these things. This is the last minute."

"I am thinking of the trunk you spoke of," replied Déruchette. "Why do you not keep it for your wife, when you marry?"

"It is most likely, madam," replied Gilliatt, "that I shall never marry."

"That would be a pity," said Déruchette; "you are so good."

And Déruchette smiled. Gilliatt returned her smile.

Then he assisted her to step into the boat.

In less than a quarter of an hour afterwards Caudray and Déruchette were aboard the Cashmere in the roads.

V

THE GREAT TOMB

Gilliatt walked along the water-side, passed rapidly through St. Peter's Port, and then turned towards St. Sampson by the seashore. In his anxiety to meet no one whom he knew, he avoided the highways now filled with foot-passengers by his great achievement.

For a long time, as the reader knows, he had had a peculiar manner of traversing the country in all parts without being observed. He knew the bye-paths, and favoured solitary and winding routes; he had the shy habits of a wild beast who knows that he is disliked, and keeps at a distance. When quite a child, he had been quick to feel how little welcome men showed in their faces at his approach, and he had gradually contracted that habit of being alone which had since become an instinct.

He passed through the Esplanade, then by the Salerie. Now and then he turned and looked behind him at the Cashmere in the roads, which was beginning to set her sails. There was little wind; Gilliatt went faster than the Cashmere. He walked with downcast eyes among the lower rocks at the water's edge. The tide was beginning to rise.

Suddenly he stopped, and, turning his back, contemplated for some minutes a group of oaks beyond the rocks which concealed the road to

Vale. They were the oaks at the spot called the Basses Maisons. It was there that Déruchette once wrote with her finger the name of Gilliatt in the snow. Many a day had passed since that snow had melted away.

Then he pursued his way.

The day was beautiful; more beautiful than any that had yet been seen that year. It was one of those spring days when May suddenly pours forth all its beauty, and when nature seems to have no thought but to rejoice and be happy. Amidst the many murmurs from forest and village, from the sea and the air, a sound of cooing could be distinguished. The first butterflies of the year were resting on the early roses. Everything in nature seemed new--the grass, the mosses, the leaves, the perfumes, the rays of light. The sun shone as if it had never shone before. The pebbles seemed bathed in coolness. Birds but lately fledged sang out their deep notes from the trees, or fluttered among the boughs in their attempts to use their new-found wings. There was a chattering all together of goldfinches, pewits, tomtits, woodpeckers, bullfinches, and thrushes. The blossoms of lilacs, May lilies, daphnes, and melilots mingled their various hues in the thickets. A beautiful kind of water-weed peculiar to Guernsey covered the pools with an emerald green; where the kingfishers and the water-wagtails, which make such graceful little nests, came down to bathe their wings. Through every opening in the branches appeared the deep blue sky. A few lazy clouds followed each other in the azure depths. The ear seemed to catch the sound of kisses sent from invisible lips. Every old wall had its tufts of wallflowers. The plum-trees and laburnums were in blossom; their white and yellow

masses gleamed through the interlacing boughs. The spring showered all her gold and silver on the woods. The new shoots and leaves were green and fresh. Calls of welcome were in the air; the approaching summer opened her hospitable doors for birds coming from afar. It was the time of the arrival of the swallows. The clusters of furze-bushes bordered the steep sides of hollow roads in anticipation of the clusters of the hawthorn. The pretty and the beautiful reigned side by side; the magnificent and the graceful, the great and the little, had each their place. No note in the great concert of nature was lost. Green microscopic beauties took their place in the vast universal plan in which all seemed distinguishable as in limpid water. Everywhere a divine fulness, a mysterious sense of expansion, suggested the unseen effort of the sap in movement. Guttering things glittered more than ever; loving natures became more tender. There was a hymn in the flowers, and a radiance in the sounds of the air. The wide-diffused harmony of nature burst forth on every side. All things which felt the dawn of life invited others to put forth shoots. A movement coming from below, and also from above, stirred vaguely all hearts susceptible to the scattered and subterranean influence of germination. The flower shadowed forth the fruit; young maidens dreamed of love. It was nature's universal bridal. It was fine, bright, and warm; through the hedges in the meadows children were seen laughing and playing at their games. The fruit-trees filled the orchards with their heaps of white and pink blossom. In the fields were primroses, cowslips, milfoil, daffodils, daisies, speedwell, jacinths, and violets. Blue borage and yellow irises swarmed with those beautiful little pink stars which flower always in groups, and are hence called "companions." Creatures with golden scales glided between

the stones. The flowering houseleek covered the thatched roofs with purple patches. Women were plaiting hives in the open air; and the bees were abroad, mingling their humming with the murmurs from the sea. Nature, sensitive to the touch of spring, exhaled delight.

When Gilliatt arrived at St. Sampson, the water had not yet risen at the further end of the harbour, and he was able to cross it dry-footed unperceived behind the hulls of vessels fixed for repair. A number of flat stones were placed there at regular distances to make a causeway.

He was not observed. The crowd was at the other end of the port, near the narrow entrance, by the Bravées. There his name was in every mouth. They were, in fact, speaking about him so much that none paid attention to him. He passed, sheltered in some degree by the very commotion that he had caused.

He saw from afar the sloop in the place where he had moored it, with the funnel standing between its four chains; observed a movement of carpenters at their work, and confused outlines of figures passing to and fro; and he could distinguish the loud and cheery voice of Mess Lethierry giving orders.

He threaded the narrow alleys behind the Bravées. There was no one there beside him. All curiosity was concentrated on the front of the house. He chose the footpath alongside the low wall of the garden, but stopped at the angle where the wild mallow grew. He saw once more the stone where he used to pass his time; saw once more the wooden garden seat where

Déruchette was accustomed to sit, and glanced again at the pathway of the alley where he had seen the embrace of two shadows which had vanished.

He soon went on his way, climbed the hill of Vale Castle, descended again, and directed his steps towards the Bû de la Rue.

The Houmet-Paradis was a solitude.

His house was in the same state in which he had left it in the morning, after dressing himself to go to St. Peter's Port.

A window was open, through which his bagpipe might have been seen hanging to a nail upon the wall.

Upon the table was the little Bible given to him in token of gratitude by the stranger whom he now knew as Caudray.

The key was in the door. He approached; placed his hand upon it; turned it twice in the lock, put the key in his pocket, and departed.

He walked not in the direction of the town, but towards the sea.

He traversed his garden diagonally, taking the shortest way without regard to the beds, but taking care not to tread upon the plants which he placed there, because he had heard that they were favourites with Déruchette.

He crossed the parapet wall, and let himself down upon the rocks.

Going straight on, he began to follow the long ridge of rocks which connected the Bû de la Rue with the great natural obelisk of granite rising erect from the sea, which was known as the Beast's Horn. This was the place of the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat.

He strode on from block to block like a giant among mountains. To make long strides upon a row of breakers is like walking upon the ridge of a roof.

A fisherwoman with dredge-nets, who had been walking naked-footed among the pools of sea-water at some distance, and had just regained the shore, called to him, "Take care; the tide is coming." But he held on his way.

Having arrived at the great rock of the point, the Horn, which rises like a pinnacle from the sea, he stopped. It was the extremity of the promontory.

He looked around.

Out at sea a few sailing boats at anchor were fishing. Now and then rivulets of silver glittered among them in the sun: it was the water running from the nets. The Cashmere was not yet off St. Sampson. She had set her main-topsail, and was between Herm and Jethou.

Gilliatt rounded the rock, and came under the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat, at the foot of that kind of abrupt stairs where, less than three months before, he had assisted Caudray to come down. He ascended.

The greater number of the steps were already under water. Two or three only were still dry, by which he climbed.

The steps led up to the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat. He reached the niche, contemplated it for a moment, pressed his hand upon his eyes, and let it glide gently from one eyelid to the other--a gesture by which he seemed to obliterate the memory of the past--then sat down in the hollow, with the perpendicular wall behind him, and the ocean at his feet.

The Cashmere at that moment was passing the great round half-submerged tower, defended by one sergeant and a cannon, which marks the half way in the roads between Herm and St. Peter's Port.

A few flowers stirred among the crevices in the rock about Gilliatt's head. The sea was blue as far as eye could reach. The wind came from the east; there was a little surf in the direction of the island of Sark, of which only the western side is visible from Guernsey. In the distance appeared the coast of France like a mist, with the long yellow strips of sand about Carteret. Now and then a white butterfly fluttered by. The butterflies frequently fly out to sea.

The breeze was very slight. The blue expanse, both above and below, was

tranquil. Not a ripple agitated those species of serpents, of an azure more or less dark, which indicate on the surface of the sea the lines of sunken rocks.

The Cashmere, little moved by the wind, had set her topsail and studding-sails to catch the breeze. All her canvas was spread, but the wind being a side one, her studding-sails only compelled her to hug the Guernsey coast more closely. She had passed the beacon of St. Sampson, and was off the hill of Vale Castle. The moment was approaching when she would double the point of the Bû de la Rue.

Gilliatt watched her approach.

The air and sea were still. The tide rose not by waves, but by an imperceptible swell. The level of the water crept upward without a palpitation. The subdued murmur from the open sea was soft as the breathing of a child.

In the direction of the harbour of St. Sampson, faint echoes could be heard of carpenters' hammers. The carpenters were probably the workmen constructing the tackle, gear, and apparatus for removing the engine from the sloop. The sounds, however, scarcely reached Gilliatt by reason of the mass of granite at his back.

The Cashmere approached with the slowness of a phantom.

Gilliatt watched it still.

Suddenly a touch and a sensation of cold caused him to look down. The sea had reached his feet.

He lowered his eyes, then raised them again.

The Cashmere was quite near.

The rock in which the rains had hollowed out the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat was so completely vertical, and there was so much water at its base, that in calm weather vessels were able to pass without danger within a few cables' lengths.

The Cashmere was abreast of the rock. It rose straight upwards as if it had grown out of the water; or like the lengthening out of a shadow. The rigging showed black against the heavens and in the magnificent expanse of the sea. The long sails, passing for a moment over the sun, became lighted up with a singular glory and transparence. The water murmured indistinctly; but no other noise marked the majestic gliding of that outline. The deck was as visible as if he had stood upon it.

The steersman was at the helm; a cabin-boy was climbing the shrouds; a few passengers leaning on the bulwarks were contemplating the beauty of the scene. The captain was smoking; but nothing of all this was seen by Gilliatt.

There was a spot on the deck on which the broad sunlight fell. It was on

this corner that his eyes were fixed. In this sunlight were Déruchette and Caudray. They were sitting together side by side, like two birds, warming themselves in the noonday sun, upon one of those covered seats with a little awning which well-ordered packet-boats provided for passengers, and upon which was the inscription, when it happened to be an English vessel, "For ladies only." Déruchette's head was leaning upon Caudray's shoulder; his arm was around her waist; they held each other's hands with their fingers interwoven. A celestial light was discernible in those two faces formed by innocence. Their chaste embrace was expressive of their earthly union and their purity of soul. The seat was a sort of alcove, almost a nest; it was at the same time a glory round them; the tender aureola of love passing into a cloud.

The silence was like the calm of heaven.

Caudray's gaze was fixed in contemplation. Déruchette's lips moved; and, amidst that perfect silence, as the wind carried the vessel near shore, and it glided within a few fathoms of the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat, Gilliatt heard the tender and musical voice of Déruchette exclaiming:

"Look yonder. It seems as if there were a man upon the rock."

The vessel passed.

Leaving the promontory of the Bû de la Rue behind, the Cashmere glided on upon the waters. In less than a quarter of an hour, her masts and sails formed only a white obelisk, gradually decreasing against the

horizon. Gilliatt felt that the water had reached his knees.

He contemplated the vessel speeding on her way.

The breeze freshened out at sea. He could see the Cashmere run out her lower studding-sails and her staysails, to take advantage of the rising wind. She was already clear of the waters of Guernsey. Gilliatt followed the vessel with his eyes.

The waves had reached his waist.

The tide was rising: time was passing away.

The seamews and cormorants flew about him restlessly, as if anxious to warn him of his danger. It seemed as if some of his old companions of the Douvres rocks flying there had recognised him.

An hour had passed.

The wind from the sea was scarcely felt in the roads; but the form of the Cashmere was rapidly growing less. The sloop, according to all appearance, was sailing fast. It was already nearly off the Casquets.

There was no foam around the Gild-Holm-'Ur; no wave beat against its granite sides. The water rose peacefully. It was nearly level with Gilliatt's shoulders.

Another hour had passed.

The Cashmere was beyond the waters of Aurigny. The Ortach rock concealed it for a moment; it passed behind it, and came forth again as from an eclipse. The sloop was veering to the north upon the open sea. It was now only a point glittering in the sun.

The birds were hovering about Gilliatt, uttering short cries. Only his head was now visible. The tide was nearly at the full. Evening was approaching. Behind him, in the roads, a few fishing-boats were making for the harbour.

Gilliatt's eyes continued fixed upon the vessel in the horizon. Their expression resembled nothing earthly. A strange lustre shone in their calm and tragic depths. There was in them the peace of vanished hopes, the calm but sorrowful acceptance of an end far different from his dreams. By degrees the dusk of heaven began to darken in them, though gazing still upon the point in space. At the same moment the wide waters round the Gild-Holm-'Ur and the vast gathering twilight closed upon them.

The Cashmere, now scarcely perceptible, had become a mere spot in the thin haze.

Gradually, the spot, which was but a shape, grew paler.

Then it dwindled, and finally disappeared.

At the moment when the vessel vanished on the line of the horizon, the head of Gilliatt disappeared. Nothing was visible now but the sea.