

THE BATTLE OF THE STRONG.

XV.

THE house of Elie Mattingley, the smuggler, stood in the Rue d'Egypte, not far east of the Vier Prison. It was a little larger than any other house in the street, a little higher, a little wider, a little older. It had belonged to a jurat of some repute, who had parted with it to Mattingley not long before he died, — on what terms no one had discovered. There was no doubt as to the validity of the transfer, for the deed was duly registered au greffe, and it said, "In consideration of one livre turnoïs," etc.; but not even the greffier believed that this was the real purchase money, and he was used to seeing strange examples of deed and purchase. Possibly, however, it was a libel on the departed jurat that he and Mattingley had had dealings unrecognized by customs laws, crystallizing at last into this legacy to the famous pirate-smuggler.

Unlike any other house in the street, this one had a high stone wall in front, inclosing a small square paved with flat stones. In this square was an old ivy-covered well, with beautiful ferns growing inside its hood. The well had a small antique iron gate, and the bucket, which hung on a hook inside the hood, was an old open wine-keg, — appropriate emblem of a smuggler's house. In one corner, girdled by about five square feet of green earth, grew a pear-tree, bearing large juicy fruit, reserved solely for the use of a certain distinguished lodger, the Chevalier du Champsavoys de Beaumanoir.

In the summer the chevalier always had his breakfast under this tree. It consisted of a cup of coffee made by his faithful châtelaine, Carterette, a roll of bread, an omelet, and two ripe pears. This was his breakfast while the pears

lasted; when they were done, he had the grapes that grew on the wall; and when they in turn were gone, it was time to take his breakfast indoors, and have done with fruits and summering.

Occasionally one other person had breakfast under the pear-tree with the chevalier. This was Savary *dit* Détricand, whom the chevalier met less frequently, however, than many people of the town, though they lived in the same house. Détricand had been but a fitful lodger, absent at times for a month or so, and running up bills for food and wine, of which payment was never summarily demanded by Mattingley, for some time or other he always paid. When he did pay he never questioned the bill, and, what was most important, whether he was sober or "warm as a thrush," he always treated Carterette with respect; though they quarreled often, too, and she was not sparing with her tongue under slight temptation. Yet, when he chanced to be there, Carterette herself usually cooked his breakfast; for Détricand had once said that no one could roast a conger as she could, and she had promptly succumbed to the frank flattery. But Carterette did more: she gave Détricand good advice in as candid and peremptory a way, yet with as good feeling, as ever woman gave to man. He accepted it nonchalantly, but he did not follow it; for he had no desire to reform for the sake of principle, and he did not care enough for Carterette to do it from personal feeling. It was given to Guida Landresse to rouse that personal feeling, and on his own part he had made a promise to her, and he intended to keep it.

Despite their many differences and Carterette's frequent bad tempers, when the day came for Détricand to leave for France; when, sober and in his right mind, and with an air of purpose in his

face, he sat down under the pear-tree for his last breakfast with the chevalier, Carterette was very unhappy. The chevalier politely insisted on her sitting at table with them, — a thing he had never done before. Ever since yesterday, when Olivier Delagarde had appeared in the Vier Marchi, she had longed to speak to Détrican about him; but there had been no opportunity, and she had not dared do it with any obvious intention. Once or twice during breakfast Maitre Ranulph's name was mentioned, and Carterette listened with beating heart; then the chevalier praised Ranulph's father, and Détrican turned the conversation. She noticed this.

Carterette spent the rest of the day in wondering what Ranulph's trouble was, and in what way it was associated with his father. Toward evening she determined that she would go to Ranulph's house to see M. Delagarde. Ranulph was not likely to return from St. Aubin's until sundown, and no doubt his father would be at home.

She was just starting when the door in the garden wall opened, and Olivier Delagarde entered. The evening sun was shining softly over the house and the granite wall, which in the soft light was mauve-tinted, while the well-worn paving-stones looked like some choice mineral. Carterette was standing in the door as the old man came in, and when he doffed his hat to her she thought she had never seen anything more beautiful than the smooth forehead, white hair, and long beard of the returned patriot. That was the first impression he produced; but as one looked closer one saw the quick, furtive, watery eye; and when by chance the mustache was lifted, the unwholesome, drooping mouth revealed a dark depth of depravity, and the teeth were broken, blackened, and irregular. There was, too, something sinister in the yellow stockings, luridly contrasting with the black knickerbockers and rusty blue coat.

At first Carterette was inclined to run toward the prophet-like figure, — it was Ranulph's father; next she drew back with dislike, — the smile was leering malice under the guise of amiable mirth. But he was old and he looked feeble, so her mind instantly changed again, and she offered him a seat on a bench beside the arched doorway with the inscription above it, —

"Nor Poverty nor Riches, but Daily Bread
Under Mine Own Fig Tree."

In front of the bench was a table, where Mattingley and Carterette were wont to eat their meals in summer, and in the table were round holes wherein small wooden bowls or trenchers were sunk. After the custom of the country, Carterette at once offered the old man refreshment. He asked for something to drink, and she brought him brandy. Good old brandy was always to be got at the house of Elie Mattingley. Then she brought forth a fine old delft bowl, with handles like a loving-cup, reserved for honored guests. It was full of conger-eel soup, and she fitted it into the hole occupied by the wooden trencher. As Olivier Delagarde drank, Carterette noticed a peculiar, uncanny twitching of the fingers and eyelids. The old man's eyes were continually watching, always shifting from place to place. He asked Carterette several questions. He had known the house years before. Did the deep stream still run beneath it? Was the round hole in the floor of the back room, from which water used to be drawn in old days? Yes, Carterette said, that was M. Détrican's bedroom now, and you could plainly hear the stream running beneath the house. Did not the noise of the water worry poor M. Détrican? And so it still went straight on into the sea, — and, of course, much swifter after such a heavy rain as they had had the day before!

Carterette took him into every room in the house, save her own and those of the Chevalier du Champsavoys. In the

kitchen and in Détricand's bedroom Olivier Delagarde's eyes were very busy. He saw that the door of the kitchen opened immediately into a garden, with a gate in the wall at the back; he also saw that the lozenge-paned windows opened like doors, and were not securely fastened; and he tried the trap-door in Détricand's bedroom to see if the water flowed beneath just as it did when he was young. . . . Yes, there it was, running swiftly away to the sea!

At first Carterette thought it strange that Delagarde should show such interest in all this; but then, again, why should he not? He had known the house as a boy. Then he babbled all the way to the door that led into the street; for now he would stay no longer. He seemed in a hurry to be gone, nor could the suggestion that Elie Mattingley would soon return induce him to remain.

When he had gone, Carterette sat wondering why it was that Ranulph's father should inspire her with so much dislike. She knew that at this moment no man in Jersey was so popular as Olivier Delagarde. The longer she thought, the more puzzled she became. No sooner had she got one theory than another forced her to move on. In the language of her people, she did not know on which foot to dance.

As she sat and thought, Détricand entered, loaded with parcels and bundles, mostly gifts for her father and herself; and for Champsavoy there was a fine delft shaving-dish, shaped like a quarter-moon to fit the neck. These were distributed, and then came the packing of Détricand's bags; and by the time supper was over, and this was done, it was quite dark. Then Détricand said that he would go to bed at once, for it was ten o'clock, and he must be up at three, when his boat was to steal away to Brittany, and land him near to the outposts of the Royalist army led by La Rochejaquelein.

Détricand was having the best hour

of an ill-spent life; he was enjoying that rare virtue, enthusiasm, which in his case was joined to that dangerous temptation, repentance with reformation, — deep pitfalls of pride and self-righteousness. No man so vain as he who, having erred and gone astray, is now returned to the dazzling heights of a self-conscious virtue.

He was, however, of those to whom is given the gift of humor, which saveth from haughtiness and the pious despotism of the returned prodigal. He was going back to France, to fight in what he believed to be a hopeless cause; but the very hopelessness of it appealed to him, and he would not have gone if it were sure to be successful. In a prosperous cause his gallantry and devotion would not necessarily count for much; in a despairing one they might put another stone on the pyramid of sacrifice and chivalry. He was quite ready to have it out with the ravagers of France, and to pay the price with his life, if need be.

Now at last the packing was finished, everything was done, and he was stooping over a bag to fasten it. The candle was in the window. Suddenly a hand — a long, skinny hand — reached softly out from behind a large press, and swallowed and crushed out the flame. Détricand raised his head quickly, astonished. There was no wind blowing; the candle had not even flickered when burning. But then, again, he had not heard a sound; perhaps that was because his foot was scraping the floor at the moment the light went out. He looked out of the window, but there was only starlight, and he could not see distinctly. Turning round, he went to the door of the outer hallway, opened it, and stepped into the garden. As he did so, a figure slipped from behind the press in the bedroom, swiftly raised the trap-door in the flooring, then, shadowed by the door leading into the hallway, waited for Détricand.

Presently Détricand's footstep was

heard. He entered the hall, stood in the doorway of the bedroom for an instant, then stepped inside.

At once his attention was arrested. There was the sound of flowing water beneath his feet. This could always be heard in his room, but now how distinct and loud it was! He realized immediately that the trap-door was open, and he listened for a second. He was conscious of some one in the room. He made a step toward the door, but it closed softly. He moved swiftly to the window, for the presence was near the door.

What did it mean? Who was it? Was there one, or more? Was murder intended? The silence, the weirdness, stopped his tongue; besides, what was the good of crying out? Whatever was to happen would happen at once. He struck a light, and held it up. As he did so some one or something rushed at him. What a fool he had been, he thought: the light had revealed his situation perfectly. But at the same moment came the instinct to throw himself to one side. In that one flash he had seen — a man's white beard.

Next instant there was a sharp sting in his right shoulder. The knife had missed his breast, — the quick swerving had saved him. Even as the knife struck he threw himself on his assailant. Then came a struggle for the weapon. The long fingers of the man with the white beard clove to it like a dead soldier's to the handle of a sword. Once the knife gashed Détricand's hand, and then he pinioned the wrist of his enemy and tripped him up. The miscreant fell half across the opening in the floor. One foot, hanging down, almost touched the running water.

Détricand had his foe at his mercy. There was at first an inclination to drop him into the stream, but that was put away as quickly as it came. Presently he gave the wretch a sudden twist, pulling him clear of the hole, and wrenched the knife from his fingers.

"Now, monsieur," said he, "now we'll have a look at you."

The figure lay quiet beneath him. The nervous strength was gone, the body was limp, the breathing was that of a frightened man. The light flared. Détricand held it down, and there was revealed the face of Olivier Delagarde, haggard, malicious, cowardly.

"So, monsieur the traitor," said Détricand, "so you'd be a murderer, too, eh?"

The old man mumbled an oath.

"Hand of the devil," continued Détricand, "was there ever a greater beast than you! I have held my tongue about you these eleven years past, and I held it yesterday and saved your paltry life, and you'd repay me by stabbing me in the dark, — in a fine old-fashioned way, too, with your trap-doors, and blown-out candle, and Italian tricks, and" — He held the candle down near the white beard as though he would singe it. "Come, sit up against the wall there, and let me look at you."

Cringingly the old man drew himself over to the wall. Détricand, seating himself in a chair, held the candle up before him. After a moment he said, "What I want to know is, how could a low-flying cormorant like you beget a gull of the cliffs like Maître Ranulph?"

The old man did not answer, but sat blinking with malignant yet fearful eyes at Détricand, who continued: —

"What did you come back for? Why did n't you stay dead? Ranulph had a name as clean as a piece of paper from the mill, and he can't write it now without turning sick because it's the same name as yours. You're the choice black-amoor of creation, are n't you! Now, what have you got to say?"

"Let me go, let me go," whined the other. "Let me go, monsieur. Don't send me to prison."

Détricand stirred him with his foot as one might stir a pile of dirt.

"Listen," said he. "Down there in

the Vier Marchi they 're cutting off the ear of a man and nailing it to a post, because he ill used a cow! What do you suppose they 'd do to you, if I took you down to the Vier Marchi and told them that it was through you Rullecour landed, and that you 'd have seen them all murdered eleven years ago, — eh, maître cormorant?"

The old man crawled toward Détricand on his knees. "Let me go, let me go," he begged. "I was mad; I did n't know what I was doing; I have n't been right in the head since I was in the Guiana prison."

It struck Détricand that the man must have had some awful experience in prison, for now the most painful terror was in his eyes, the most abject fear. He had never seen so pitiable and craven a sight. This seemed more like an animal which had been cowed by torture than a man who had endured punishment.

"What were you in prison for in Guiana, and what did they do to you there?" asked Détricand curiously.

Again Delagarde shivered horribly, and tears streamed down his cheeks as he whined piteously, "Oh no, no, no! For the mercy of Christ, no!" He threw up his hands as if to ward off a blow.

Détricand saw that this was not acting, — that it was a supreme terror, an awful momentary aberration; for the traitor's eyes were staring and dilated, the mouth was contracted in agony, the hands were rigidly clutching an imaginary something, the body stiffened where it crouched.

Détricand understood now. The old man had been tied to a triangle and whipped, — how horribly who might know? His mood toward the miserable creature changed; he spoke to him in a firm tone: "There, that 's enough; you 're not going to be hurt. Be quiet now, and you shall not be touched."

Then he stooped over, and quickly undoing Delagarde's vest, he pulled down the coat, waistcoat, and shirt, and looked

at his back. As far as he could see it was scarred as though by a red-hot iron, and the healed welts were like whipcords on the shriveled skin. Buttoning the shirt and straightening the coat again with his own fingers, Détricand said: —

"Now, monsieur, you 're to go home and sleep the sleep of the unjust, and you 're to keep the sixth commandment, and you 're to make no more lying speeches in the Vier Marchi. You 've made a shameful mess of your son's life, and you 're to die now as soon as you can without attracting attention. You 're to pray for an accident to take you out of the world: a wind to blow you over a cliff, a roof to fall on you, a boat to go down with you, a hole in the ground to swallow you up, a fever or a plague to end you in a day."

He opened the door to let him go; but suddenly catching his arms he held him in a close grip. "Hush!" he said in a mysterious whisper. "Listen!"

There was only the weird sound of the running water through the open trap-door of the floor. He knew how superstitious was every Jerseyman, and he worked upon that weakness now.

"You hear that flood running to the sea," he said solemnly. "You tried to kill and drown me to-night. You 've heard how, when one man has drowned another, an invisible stream will follow the murderer wherever he goes, and he will hear it, hour after hour, month after month, year after year, until one day it will come on him in a huge flood, and he will be found, whether in the road, or in his bed, or at the table, or in the field, drowned and dead!"

The old man shivered violently.

"You know Manon Moignard, the witch?" continued Détricand. "Well, if you don't do what I say — and I shall find out, mind you — she shall bewitch the flood on you. Listen! . . . hear it! That 's the sound you 'll hear every day of your life, if you break the promise you 've got to make to me now."

He spoke the promise with ghostly deliberation, and Delagarde, all the desperado gone out of him, repeated it in a husky voice. Whereupon Détrican led him into the garden, saw him safe out into the road, watched him disappear; then, slapping his hands as though to rid them of some pollution, and with an exclamation of disgust, he went back into the house.

Before morning he was standing on the soil of France, and by another sun-down he saw the lights of the army of La Rochejaquelein in the valley of the Vendée.

XVI.

The night and morning after Guida's marriage came and went. The day drew on to the hour fixed for the going of the Narcissus. Guida had worked all the forenoon with a feverish unrest, not trusting herself, though the temptation was great, to go where she might see Philip's vessel lying in the tideway. She had determined that only when the moment for sailing arrived would she visit the shore; but from her kitchen doorway there was spread before her a wide acreage of blue water and a perfect sky; and out there was Noirmont Point, round which Philip's ship would go, and be lost to her vision thereafter.

The day wore on. She got her grandfather's dinner, saw him bestowed in his great armchair for his afternoon sleep, and when her household work was done settled herself at the spinning-wheel. The old man loved to have her spin and sing as he drowsed into a sound sleep. To-day his eyes had followed her everywhere. He could not have told why it was, but somehow all at once he seemed deeply to realize her, — her beauty, the joy of this innocent living intelligence moving through his home. She had always been necessary to him, but he had taken her presence as a matter

of course. She had always been to him the most wonderful child ever given to comfort an old man's life, but now, as he abstractedly took a pinch of snuff from his little tortoise-shell case, and then forgot to put it to his nose, he seemed suddenly to get that clearness of sight, that separateness, that perspective, which enabled him to see her as she really was. He took another pinch of snuff, and again forgot to put it to his nose, but brushed imaginary dust from his coat, as was his wont, and whispered to himself: —

"Why now, why now, I had not thought she was so much a woman. Flowers of the sea, but what eyes, what a carriage, and what an air! I had not thought, — h'm! how strange, blind old bat that I am! — I had not thought she was grown such a lady. Why, it was only yesterday, surely but yesterday, that I rocked her to sleep there in the corner. Larchant de Mauprat," — he shook his head at himself, — "you are growing old. Let me see, — why yes, she was born the day I sold the blue enameled timepiece to his highness the Duc de Mauban. The duc was but putting the watch to his ear when a message comes to say the child there is born. 'Good,' says the Duc de Mauban, when he hears. 'Give me the honor, de Mauprat,' says he, 'for the sake of old days in France, to offer a name to the brave innocent, — for the sake of old associations,' says de Mauban. 'You knew my wife, de Mauprat,' says he; 'you knew the Duchesse Guida, — Guidabaldine. She's been gone these ten years, alas! You were with me when we were married, de Mauprat,' says the duc; 'I should care to return the compliment, if you will allow me to offer a name, eh?' 'Monsieur le Duc,' said I, 'there is no honor I more desire for my grandchild.' 'Then let the name of Guidabaldine be somewhere among others she will carry, and — and I'll not forget her, de Mauprat, I'll not forget her.' . . . Eh, eh, I won-

der — I wonder if he *has* forgotten the little Guidabaldine there? He sent her a golden cup for the christening, but I wonder — I wonder — if he has forgotten her since? So quick of tongue, so bright of eye, so light of foot, so sweet a face — if one could but be always young! When her grandmother, my wife, my Julie, when she was young — ah! she was fair, fairer than Guida, but not so tall — not quite so tall. Ah!”

He was growing more drowsy. The days of his life, though they lengthened on beyond fourscore, each in itself grew shorter. Sleep and a babbling memory, the pleasure of the sun, the calm and comfort of an existence freed from all passion, all ambition, all care, — this was his life.

He was slipping away into unconsciousness when he realized that Guida was singing: —

“Spin, spin, belle Mergaton!

The moon wheels full, and the tide flows high,

And your wedding-dress you must put it on
Ere the night hath no moon in the sky —
Gigoton, Mergaton, spin!”

She was smiling. She seemed quite unconscious of his presence; and how bright her eyes were, how alive with thought and vision was the face!

“I had never thought she was so much a woman,” he said drowsily; “I — I wonder why — I never noticed it?” He roused himself again, brushed imaginary snuff from his coat, keeping time with his foot to the wheel as it went round. “I — I suppose she will wed soon. . . . I had forgotten. But she must marry well, she must marry well — she is the godchild of the Duc de Mauban. How the wheel goes round! I used to hear — her mother — sing that song, ‘Gigoton, Mergaton — spin — spin — spin’” —

He was asleep.

Guida put by the wheel, and left the house. Passing through the Rue des Sablons, she came to the shore. It was

high tide. This was the time that Philip’s ship was to go. She had dressed herself with as much solicitude as to what might please his eye as though she were going to meet him in person. And not without reason, for, though she could not see him from the land, she knew he could see her plainly through his telescope, if he chose.

She reached the shore. The time had come for Philip to go, but there was his ship rocking in the tideway with no sails set. Perhaps the Narcissus was not going; perhaps, after all, Philip was to remain! She laughed with pleasure at the thought of that. Her eyes lingered lovingly upon the ship which was her husband’s home upon the sea. Just such another vessel Philip would command. At a word from him, those guns, like long, black, threatening arms thrust out, would strike for England with thunder and fire.

A bugle-call came across the water to her. It was clear, vibrant, and compelling. It represented power. Power, — that was what Philip, with his ship, would stand for in the name of England. Danger, — oh yes, there would be danger, but Heaven would be good to her; Philip should go safe through storm and war, and some day great honors would be done him. He should be an admiral, and more, perhaps: he had said so. He was going to do it as much for her as for himself; and when he had done it, to be proud of it more for her than for himself: he had said so; she believed in him utterly. Since that day upon the Ecréhos it had never occurred to her not to believe him. Where she gave her faith she gave it wholly; where she withdrew it —

The bugle-call sounded again. Perhaps that was the signal to set sail. No, a boat was putting out from the side of the Narcissus! It was coming landward. As she watched its approach she heard a chorus of boisterous voices behind her. She turned, and saw nearing the shore

from the Rue d'Egypte a half dozen sailors, singing cheerily : —

"Get you on, get you on, get you on,
Get you on to your fo'e'stle 'ome;
Leave your lasses, leave your beer,
For the bugle what you 'ear
Pipes you on to your fo'e'stle 'ome —
'Ome, 'ome, 'ome —
Pipes you on to your fo'e'stle 'ome."

Guida drew near.

"The Narcissus is not leaving to-day?" she asked of the foremost sailor.

The man touched his cap. "Not to-day, lady."

"When does she leave?"

"Well, that's more nor I can say, lady, but the cap'n of the maintop, yander, 'e knows."

She approached the captain of the maintop. "When does the Narcissus leave?" she asked.

He looked her up and down, at first with something like boldness, but instantly he touched his hat. "To-morrow, mistress, — she leaves at 'igh tide to-morrow."

With an eye for a fee or a bribe, he drew a little away from the others, and said to her in a low tone, "Is there anything what I could do for you, mistress? P'r'aps you wanted some word carried aboard, mistress?"

She hesitated an instant, then said, "No — no, thank you."

He still waited, however, rubbing his hand on his hip with a mock bashfulness. There was an instant's pause; then she divined his meaning.

She took from her pocket a shilling. She had never given away so much money in her life before, but she seemed to feel instinctively that now she must give freely, *now that she was the wife of an officer of the navy*. Strange how these sailors to-day appeared so different to her from any she had ever met before. She felt as if they all belonged to her. She offered the shilling to the captain of the maintop.

His eyes gloated over the money, but he protested with an affected surprise,

"Oh, I could n't think of it, yer leddyship."

She smiled at him appealingly. Of course, she said to herself, he must take it: he was one of Philip's sailors, — one of her sailors now.

"Ah, but you will take it! I — I have a r-relative" — she hesitated at the word — "in the navy."

"'Ave you now, yer leddyship?" he returned. "Well, then, I'm proud to 'ave the shilling to drink 'is 'ealth, yer leddyship." He touched his hat, and was about to turn away.

"Stay a little," she said, with bashful boldness. The joy of giving was rapidly growing to a vice. "Here's something for them," she added, nodding toward his fellows, and a second shilling came from her pocket.

"Just as you say, yer leddyship," he said doubtfully and selfishly; "but for my part, I think they've 'ad enough. I don't 'old with temptin' the weak passions of man."

"Well, then, perhaps you would n't mind keeping it?" she said sweetly.

"Yer 'ighness," he answered, drawing himself up, "if it was n't a werry hextrordinary occasion, I could n't never think on it. But seein' as you're a sea-goin' family, yer 'ighness, why, I 'opes yer 'ighness'll give me leave to drink yer 'ighness' 'ealth this werry night as ever is." He tossed the shilling into his mouth, and touched his hat again.

A moment afterward the sailors were in the boat, rowing out toward the Narcissus. Their song came back across the water : —

"Oh, you A. B. sailor-man,
Wet your whistle while you can,
For the piping of the bugle calls you
'ome —
'Ome — 'ome — 'ome —
Calls you on to your fo'e'stle 'ome."

As the night came down, and Guida sat at the kitchen doorway looking out over the sea, she wondered that Philip had sent her no message. Of course he

would not come himself; he must not: he had promised her. And yet how much she would like to see him for just one minute, to feel his arms about her, to hear him say good-by once more! Yet, too, she liked him the more for not coming.

By and by she became very restless. She would have been almost happier if he had gone that day: he was within call of her, yet they were not to see each other. She walked up and down the garden, Biribi, the dog, at her side. Sitting down on the bench beneath the apple-tree, she recalled every word that Philip had said to her two days before. Every tone of his voice, every look that he had given her, she went over in her mind, now smiling and now sighing. There is no reporting in the world so exact, so perfect, as that given by a woman's brain of the words, looks, and acts of her lover in the first days of mutual confession and understanding.

It can come but once, this dream, fantasy, illusion, — call it what you will: it belongs to the birth hour of a new and powerful feeling; it is the first sunrise of the heart. What comes after may be the calmer joy of a more truthful, a less ideal emotion, but the transitory glory of the love and passion of youth shoots higher than all other glories into the sky of time. The splendor of youth is its madness, and the splendor of that madness is its unconquerable belief. And great is the strength of it, because violence alone can destroy it. It does not yield to time nor to decay, to the long wash of experience that wears away the stone nor to disintegration. It is always broken into pieces at a blow. In the morning all is well, and ere the evening come the radiant temple is in ruins.

At night, when Guida went to bed, at first she could not sleep. Then came a drowsing, a floating between waking and sleeping, in which a hundred swift images of her short past flashed through her mind. A butterfly floating in the white

haze of a dusty road, and the cap of the careless lad that struck it down. . . . Berry-picking along the hedges beyond the quarries of Mont Mado, and washing her hands in the strange green pools at the bottom of the quarries. . . . Stooping to a stream, and saying of it to a lad, "Ro, won't it neyer come back?" . . . From the front doorway watching a poor criminal shrink beneath the lash with which he was being flogged from the Vier Marchi to the Vier Prison. . . . Seeing a procession of bride and bridegroom with young men and women gay in ribbons and pretty cottons, calling from house to house to receive the good wishes of their friends, and drinking cinnamon wine and mulled cider, — the frolic, the buoyancy, the gayety of it all. Now, in a room full of people, she was standing on a veille all beautifully flourished with posies of broom and wild flowers, and Philip was there beside her, and he was holding her hand, and they were waiting and waiting for some one who never came. Nobody took any notice of her and Philip, she thought; they stood there waiting and waiting — Why, there was M. Savary *dît* Détricand in the doorway, waving a handkerchief at her, and saying, "I've found it! I've found it!" And she awoke with a start.

Her heart was beating hard, and for a moment she was dazed; but presently she went to sleep again, and dreamed once more.

This time she was on a great warship, in a storm which was driving them toward a rocky shore. The sea was washing over the deck. She recognized the shore: it was the cliff at Plemont, in the north of Jersey, and behind the ship lay the awful Paternosters. They were drifting, drifting on the wall of rock. High above on the shore there was a solitary stone hut. The ship came nearer and nearer. The storm increased in strength. In the midst of the violence she looked up and saw a man standing in the doorway of the hut. He turned

his face toward her: it was Ranulph Delagarde, and he had a rope in his hand. He saw her and called to her, and made ready to throw the rope, but suddenly some one drew her back. She cried out, and then all grew black. . . .

And then, again, she knew she was in a small, dark cabin of the ship. She could hear the storm breaking over the deck. Now the ship struck. She could feel her grinding upon the rocks. She appeared to be sinking, sinking. There was a knocking, knocking at the door of the cabin, and a voice calling to her. How far away it seemed! Was she dying, was she drowning? The words of a nursery rhyme rang in her ears distinctly, keeping time to the knocking. She wondered who should be singing a nursery rhyme on a sinking ship.

*"La main morte,
La main morte,
Tapp' à la porte,
Tapp' à la porte."*

She shuddered. Why should the dead hand tap at her door? Yet there it was tapping louder, louder. . . . She struggled, she tried to cry out; then suddenly she grew quiet, and the tapping got fainter and fainter; her eyes opened; she was awake.

For an instant she did not know where she was. Was it a dream still? For there was a tapping — tapping at her door — no, it was at the window. A shiver ran through her. Her heart almost stopped beating. Some one was calling to her.

"Guida! Guida!"

It was Philip's voice. Her cheek had been cold the moment before; now she felt the blood tingling in her face. She slid to the floor, threw a shawl round her, and went to the casement. The tapping began again. At first she could not open the window. She was trembling from head to foot. Philip's voice quickly reassured her.

"Guida, Guida, open the window a minute!"

She hesitated. She could not — no — she could not do it. He tapped still louder.

"Guida, don't you hear me?" he asked.

She undid the catch, but she had hardly the courage even yet. He heard her now, and pressed the window a little. Then she opened it slowly, and her white face showed. "Oh, Philip," she said breathlessly, "why have you frightened me so?"

He caught her hand in his own. "Come out into the garden," he said. "Put on a dress and slippers, and come," he urged again, and kissed her hand.

"Philip," she protested, "oh, Philip, I cannot! It is too late. It is midnight. Do not ask me. Oh, why did you come?"

"Because I wanted to speak with you for one minute. I have only a little while. Please come and say good-by to me again. We are going to-morrow; there's no doubt about it this time."

"Oh, Philip," she answered, her voice quivering, "how can I? Say good-by to me here, now."

"No, no, Guida, you must come. I can't kiss you good-by where you are."

"Must I come to you?" she asked helplessly. "Well, then, Philip," she added, "go to the bench by the apple-tree, and I shall be there in a moment."

"Dearest!" he exclaimed ardently.

She closed the window.

For a moment he looked about him; then went lightly through the garden, and sat down on the bench under the apple-tree, near to the summer-house. At last he heard her footstep. He rose quickly to meet her, and as she came timidly to him clasped her in his arms.

"Philip," she said, "I'm sure this is n't right. You ought not to have come; you have broken your promise."

"Are you not glad to see me?"

"Oh, you know, you know that I'm glad to see you, but you should n't have come — Hark! what's that?"

They both held their breath, for there was a sound outside the garden wall. *Clac-clac! clac-clac!* — a strange, uncanny footstep. It seemed to be hurrying away, — *clac-clac! clac-clac!*

"Ah, I know," whispered Guida: "it is Dormy Jamais. How foolish of me to be afraid!"

"Of course, of course," said Philip, — "Dormy Jamais, who never sleeps."

"Philip — if he saw us!"

"Foolish child, the garden wall is too high for that. Besides" —

"Yes, Philip?"

"Besides, you are my wife, Guida!"

"Oh no, Philip, no; not really so until all the world is told."

"My beloved Guida, what difference can that make?"

She sighed and shook her head. "To me, Philip, it is only that which makes it right, — that the whole world knows. Ah, Philip, I am so afraid of — of secrecy."

"Nonsense!" he answered, "nonsense! Poor little wood-bird, you're frightened at nothing at all. Come and sit by me." He drew her close to him.

Her trembling presently grew less. Hundreds of glowworms were shimmering in the hedge. The grasshoppers were whirring in the muelles beyond; a flutter of wings went by overhead. The leaves were rustling softly; a fresh wind was coming up from the sea upon the soft, fragrant dusk.

They talked a little while in whispers, her hands in his, his voice soothing her, his low, hurried words giving her no time to think. But presently she shivered again, though her heart was throbbing hotly.

"Come into the summer-house, my Guida; you are cold, you are shivering." He rose, with his arm round her waist, raising her gently at the same time.

"Oh no, Philip dear," she said, "I'm not really cold — I don't know what it is" —

"Oh, but you *are* cold," he answered.

"There's a stiff southeaster rising, and your hands are like ice. Come into the arbor for a minute. It's warm there, and then — then we'll say good-by, sweetheart!"

His arm round her, he drew her with him to the summer-house, talking to her tenderly all the time. There were reassurance and comfort and loving care in his very tones.

How brightly the stars shone! How clearly the music of the stream came over the hedge! With what lazy restfulness the distant "All's well!" floated across the muelles from a ship at anchor in the tideway! How like a slumber song the wash of the sea rolled drowsily along the wind! How gracious the smell of the earth, drinking up the dew of the affluent air, which the sun on the morrow should turn into life-blood for the grass and trees and flowers!

XVII.

Philip was gone. Before breakfast was set upon the table Guida saw the Narcissus sail round Noirmont Point and disappear. Her face had taken on a new expression since yesterday. An old touch of dreaminess, of vague anticipation, was gone, — that look which belongs to youth, which feels the confident charm of the unknown future. Life was revealed, but, together with joy, wonder and pain and knowledge informed the revelation.

To Guida the marvel was brought home with vivid force: her life was linked to another's; she was a wife. Like the Spanish maiden who looks down from her window into the street and calls to her lover, so from the window of her brain Guida looked down into the highway of life, and saw one figure draw aside from the great progression and cry to her, "Mio destino!"

That was it. Philip would signal, and she must come until either he or she

should die. He had taken her hand, and she must never withdraw it; the breath of his being must henceforth give her new and healthy life, or fill her veins with a fever which should corrode the heart and burn away the spirit. Young though she was, she realized it; but she realized it without defining it. Her knowledge was expressed in her person, was diffused in her character, in her face. This gave her a spiritual force, an air, a dignity which can come only through the influence of some deep and powerful joy, or through as great and deep a suffering.

Seldom had a day of Guida's life been so busy. It seemed to her that people came and went more than usual. She did all that was required of her. She talked, she laughed a little, she answered back the pleasantries of the seafaring folk who passed her doorway or her garden. She was attentive to her grandfather; she was punctual and exact with her household duties. But all the time she was thinking — thinking — thinking. Now and again she smiled, but at times, too, tears sprang to her eyes, and were quickly dried. More than once she drew in her breath with a quick, sibilant sound, as though some thought wounded her; and she flushed suddenly, then turned pale, then came to her natural color again. Yet there was an unusual transparency in her face to-day; a sort of shining, neither of joy nor of sorrow, but the light that comes from life's first deep experiences.

Among those who chanced to come to the cottage was Maitresse Aimable. She came to ask Guida to go with her and Jean to the island of Sark, twelve miles away, where Guida had never been, but whither Jean had long promised to take her. They would be gone only one night, and, as Maitresse Aimable said, the *Sieur de Mauprat* could very well make shift that long for once.

The invitation came to Guida like water to a thirsty land. She longed to get

away from the town, to be where she could breathe; for all this day the earth seemed too small for breath: she gasped for the sea, to be alone there. To sail with Jean Touzel was practically to be alone; for Maitresse Aimable never talked, and Jean knew Guida's ways, knew when she wished to be quiet, for he had an acuteness of temperament beyond his appearance or his reputation. In Jersey phrase, he saw beyond his spectacles, — great brass-rimmed things, which, added to the humorous rotundity of his cheeks, gave a droll, childlike kind of wisdom to his look.

Guida said that she would gladly go to Sark, at which Maitresse Aimable smiled placidly, and seemed about to leave, when all at once, without any warning, she lowered herself like a vast crate upon the *veille*, and sat there looking at Guida with meditative inquiry.

Maitresse Aimable was far from clever; she was thought to be as stupid as she was heavy: she spoke so little, she appeared so opaque, that only the children had any opinion of her. Yet, too, there were a few sick and bedridden folk who longed for her coming with something almost like pleasure, — not with excitement, but certainly with a sense of satisfaction; for though she brought only some *soupe à la graisse*, or a fresh-cooked conger-eel, or a little cider, and did nothing but sit and stare, and try hopelessly to find her voice, she exuded a sort of drowsy benevolence from her face. If by chance she said, "I believe you," or "Body of my life!" she was thought to be getting garrulous.

At first the grave inquiry of her look startled Guida. She was beginning to know that sensitive fear and timidity which assail those who are possessed and tyrannized over by a secret. Under the meditative regard of her visitor, Guida said to herself, with a quick suspicion, "What does Maitresse Aimable know about Philip and me?"

How she loathed this secrecy! How

guilty she now felt, where indeed no guilt was! How she longed to call her name, her new name, from the house-tops, to testify to her absolute innocence; that her own verdict upon herself might not be like the antique verdict in the criminal procedure of the Jersey Royal Court, *More innocent than guilty*, — as if in her case there were any guilt at all! Nothing could satisfy her but the absolute, — that was her nature. She was not made for half-lights.

The voice of Maitresse Aimable roused her. Her ponderous visitor had here made a discovery which had yet been made by no other human being. After her fashion, Maitresse Aimable loved Jean Touzel as was given to few to love. Her absurd romance, her ancient illusion, had remained with her, vivifying her intelligence only in one direction. She knew when love lay behind a woman's face. Her portly stupidity gave way to intelligence now, and into the well where her voice had fallen there flashed a light from her own love-lorn, lonely, faithful heart, and the voice came up and spake freely, yet with that certainty belonging to a mechanical statement of fact. She said, "I was sixteen when I fell in love; you're seventeen — you! Ah bah, so it goes!"

Guida's face crimsoned. What — how much did Maitresse Aimable know? By what necromancy had this dull, fat, silent fisher-wife learned the secret which was the heart of her life, the soul of her being, — which was Philip? She was frightened, but danger made her cautious. She suddenly took her first step into that strange wood called by some Diplomacy, by others Ingenuity, by others, and not always rightly, Duplicity.

"Can you guess who it is?" she asked, without replying directly to the oblique charge.

"It is not Maître Ranulph," answered her friendly inquisitor; "it is not that M'sieu' Détrican, the vaurien." Guida flushed with annoyance. "It is not

Maitre Blampied, that farmer with fifty vergées, all potatoes. It is not M'sieu' Janvrin, that bat' d'la goule of an écrivain. Ah bah, so it goes!"

"Who is it, then?" persisted Guida.

"Ah bah, that is the thing!" And Maitresse Aimable's voice dropped again into the well of silence, and for a time defied all efforts to bring it up.

"How can you tell that I am in love, Maitresse Aimable?" asked Guida.

The other smiled with a torturing placidity, then opened her mouth; but nothing came of it. She watched Guida moving about the kitchen abstractedly. Her eye wandered to the raclyi, from which hung fitches of bacon, to the bellows hanging by the chimney, to the sanded floor, to the bottle-glass window with the lozenge-shaped panes set in lead, to the great Elizabethan oak chair, and at last back to Guida, as if through her the lost voice might be charmed up again.

The eyes of the two met at last, fairly, firmly; and now Guida was conscious of a look in Maitresse Aimable's face which she had never seen before. Had she herself received a new sight? Was it that we never can see until we are touched by the finger of experience, which has been dipped in the pool of pain? Then and there Guida realized that, though seeing is joy, there is the painful moment when the light breaks in on the tender sight. Guida saw and understood the look in Maitresse Aimable's face, and instantly knew it to be the same look which was in her own.

With a sudden impulse she laid down the bashin she was polishing, and, going over quickly, she leaned her cheek against Maitresse Aimable silently. She could feel the huge breast heave, she felt the vast cheek turn hot, she was conscious of a voice struggling up from the well of silence to speech, and she heard it say at last, "Gatd'en'ale! rosemary tea cures a cough, but nothing cures the love. Ah bah, so it goes!"

"Do you love Jean?" whispered Guida, not showing her face, but longing to hear the experience of another who suffered that joy called love.

Maitresse Aimable's face got hotter; she did not speak, but patted Guida's back softly with her heavy hand and nodded complacently.

"Have you always loved him?" asked Guida again, with eager inquisition, which can be likened only to that of a wayside sinner turned chapel-going saint, who is hungry to know what chanced to others when they trod the primrose path.

Maitresse Aimable again nodded, and her arm drew closer about Guida.

Then came an unsophisticated and disconcerting question: "Has Jean always loved you?"

There was a pause; the fingers did not noticeably caress Guida's shoulder, and the voice said, with the deliberate foresight and prudence of an unwilling and adroit witness, "It is not the man who wears the wedding-ring." Then, as if she had been disloyal in even suggesting that Jean might hold her lightly, she added, almost eagerly, — an enthusiasm tempered by the pathos of a half-truth, — "But my Jean always sleeps at home."

This larger excursion into speech gave her courage, and she said more; and even as Guida listened hungrily (so soon had come upon her the apprehensions and wavering moods of loving woman), she was wondering to hear this creature, considered so dull by all, speak as though out of a watchful and capable mind. What further Maitresse Aimable said was proof that if she knew little and spake little, she knew that little well; and if she had gathered meagrely from life, she had at least winnowed out some small handfuls of grain from the straw and chaff. Her sagacity impelled her to say at last, "If a man's eyes won't see, elder-water can't make him; if he will — ah bah, glad and good!" And

both arms went round Guida and hugged her awkwardly.

Maitresse Aimable had, however, exhausted her reflections (for indeed she had talked more than she had ever done in any day of her life since she married), and her voice came up but once more that morning. As she left Guida in the doorway, she said, with a last effort, "I will have one bead to pray for you, tréjous." She showed her rosary, and, Huguenot though she was, Guida touched the bead reverently. "And if there is war, I will have two beads, tréjous. A bi'tôt — good-by!"

Such was the self-revelation of Maitresse Aimable, wife of Jean Touzel, who was cruelly called in St. Helier's "la femme de ballast."

Guida stood watching her from the doorway, and the last words of the fisher-wife kept repeating themselves through her brain: "*And if there is war, I will have two beads, tréjous.*"

The allusion in the words was clear. It meant that Maitresse Aimable knew she loved Philip. How strange it was that one should read so truly without words spoken, or even from seeing acts which reveal! She herself seemed to read Maitresse Aimable all at once, — read her by virtue and in the light of the love, the consuming and primitive feeling in the breast of each for a man. Were not words necessary for speech, after all? But she stopped short suddenly; for if love might find and read love, why was it she needed speech of Philip? Why was it her spirit kept beating up against the hedge beyond which his inner self was, and, unable to see that beyond, needed reassurance by words, by promises and protestations?

All at once she was angry with herself for thinking thus where Philip was concerned. Of course Philip loved her deeply. Of course she had seen the light of love in his eyes, had felt the arms of love about her. . . . She shuddered and grew bitter, and a strange

rebellion broke loose in her. Why had Philip failed to keep his promise? It was selfish, painfully, terribly selfish, of Philip. Why, even though she had been foolish in her request, why had he not done as she wished? Was that love, — was it love to break the first promise he had ever made to his wife? Did he not *know*?

Yet she excused him to herself. Women were different from men, and men did not understand what troubled a woman's heart and spirit; they were not shaken by the same gusts of emotion; they — they were not so fine; they did not think so deeply on what a woman, when she loves, thinks always, and acts according to her thought. If Philip were only here to resolve these fears, these perplexities, to quiet this storm in her! And yet, somehow, she felt that the storm was rooting up something very deep and radical in her. It frightened her, but she fought it down.

She went into her garden: and here among her flowers and her animals she grew brighter and gayer of heart; and she laughed a little, and was most tender and pretty with her grandfather when he came home from spending the day with the chevalier.

In this manner the day passed, — in happy reminiscence and in vague foreboding; in love and in reproaches as the

secret wife, and yet as a loving, distracted girl, frightened at her own bitterness, though knowing it to be justified.

The late afternoon was spent in gaiety with her grandfather and Amice Ingouville, the fat avocat; but at night, when she went to bed, she could not sleep. She tossed from side to side; a hundred thoughts came and went. She grew feverish, her breath choked her, and she got up and opened the window. It was clear, bright moonlight, and from where she lay she could see the muelles and the ocean, and the star-sown sky above and beyond. Myriad thoughts, illusions, and imaginings swept through her brain. Supersensitive, acute, filled with impressions of things she had seen and things and places of which she had read, her brain danced through an area of intense fancies, as a kaleidoscope flashes past the eye. She was in that halfway country where the tangible is merged into the intangible; with a consciousness of being awake, while the feeling is that of an egregious, unnatural sleep. At first her dreaming was all patches, — pictures of gulls and cormorants and tall rocks and cliffs and the surf-making sea; but by and by her flaming fancies took form and continuity, and she dreamed a strange dream of an island in the sea, and of a terrible thing that happened to Philip there.

Gilbert Parker.

(To be continued.)

WASHINGTON REMINISCENCES.

I.

FOR more than a generation, a period covering the most memorable events in American annals since we became a nation, I have been a quiet observer of men and things in Washington. I have

seen Congresses and administrations come and go, the Union temporarily broken asunder and again united, and I have watched with keen interest the revolutions in politics which have rapidly succeeded one another. Most of the public men of the last generation have