

DUMAS ALEXANDRE

CAPTAIN PAUL

Александр Дюма

Captain Paul

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Alexandre Dumas

Captain Paul

INTRODUCTION

The admirers of "The Pilot," one of the most magnificent of Cooper's novels, have evinced a general feeling of regret, in which we ourselves have deeply participated, that the book, once finished, we altogether lose sight of the mysterious being whom we had followed with such intense interest, through the narrows of the Devil's Grip, and the Cloisters of St. Ruth. There is in the physiognomy, in the language, and in the actions of this person, introduced in the first place by the name of John, and afterwards under that of Paul, a melancholy so profound, a grief so bitter, a contempt of life of so intense a nature, that every reader desires to become acquainted with the motives which influenced so brave and generous a heart. For ourselves, we acknowledge that we have more than once been tempted, however indiscreet, to say the least of it, it might have been, to write to Cooper himself, and ask him for information regarding the early career and closing years of this adventurous seaman – information which we have vainly searched for in his narrative. I thought that such a request would be readily forgiven by him to whom it was addressed, for it would have been accompanied by the expression of the most sincere and ardent admiration of his work; but I was restrained by the reflection that the author himself, perhaps, knew no more of that career, of which, he had given us but an episode, than that portion of it which had been illuminated by the sun of American Independence: for, in fact, this brilliant meteor had passed from the clouds which environed his birth to the obscurity of his death in such a manner, that it was quite possible the "poet historian," being far distant from the place where his hero was born, and from the country in which he died, knew no more of him than what he has transmitted to us. The very mystery which surrounded him, may have been the cause of his selecting Paul Jones to play a part in his annals. Urged by these considerations, I resolved upon obtaining, by my own research, those details which I had so often desired to receive from others. I searched through the archives of the Navy; all I found there was a copy of the letters of marque granted to him by Louis XVI. I examined the annals of the Convention; I only found in them the Decree passed at the time of his death. I questioned his contemporaries; they told me that he was buried in the cemetery of Père la Chaise. This was all the information I could gather from my first attempts.

I then consulted our living library – Nodier, the learned – Nodier, the philosopher – Nodier, the poet. After reflecting for a few moments, he mentioned a small book written by Paul Jones himself, containing memoirs of his life, bearing this motto, "Munera sunt Laudi." I started off to hunt for this precious relic; but it was in vain I searched through libraries, rummaged the old book-stalls – all that I could find was an infamous libel, entitled, "*Paul Jones, ou Prophétie sur l'Amérique, l'Angleterre, la France, l'Espagne et la Hollande*" which I threw from me with disgust, before I had got through the fourth page, marvelling that poisons should be so enduring, and be perfectly preserved, whilst we search in vain for wholesome and nutritious food – I therefore renounced all hope in this quarter.

Some time afterwards, while taking a voyage along our coast, having started from Cherbourg, I visited St. Malo, Quimper, and l'Orient. Upon my arrival at the latter place I recollected having read in a biography of Paul Jones, that this celebrated seaman had been three times in that port. This circumstance had struck me – I had noted down the dates, and had only to open my pocket-book to ascertain them. I examined the naval archives, and in them I actually found entries of the sojourn which the two frigates, the Hanger, of eighteen guns, and the Indienne, of thirty-two, had made in these roads. As to the reasons for their coming there, whether from ignorance or neglect, the secretary who had kept the register had omitted to assign them. I was just leaving the office without further

information, when I thought of inquiring of an old clerk who was sitting there, whether there was no traditional recollection in the country as to the captain of these two ships. The old man told me that in 1784, he being then a boy, and employed in the Quarantine Office at Havre, had seen Paul Jones there. He was at that time a commodore in the fleet of the Count de Vaudreuil. The renowned courage of this officer, and his extraordinary exploits, had made such an impression upon him, that upon his, the clerk's, return to Brittany, he spoke of him to his father, who then had charge of the Chateau d'Auray. Upon hearing the name of Paul Jones, the old man started, and made a sign to him to be silent – the young man obeyed, though not without astonishment. He frequently afterwards questioned his father upon the subject, but he always refused to satisfy his curiosity. It was not till after the death of the Marchioness d'Auray, the emigration of her son, the Marquis, and the dispersion of the family at the Revolution, that the old man felt himself permitted to reveal, even to his son, the strange and mysterious history, in which that of the object of my inquiries was so singularly blended. Although nearly, forty years had passed away since his father had related that eventful history, it had made so deep an impression upon him that he repeated it to me, as he assured me, nearly word for word.

I have treasured up this history in the recesses of my memory for nearly seven years: and it would have still remained buried there, with a mass of other recollections, destined never to see the light, had I not about six months ago read "The Pilot" for the second time, and even with much greater interest than before; for, thanks to the researches I had made, the hero was no longer to me an unknown being, appearing only for an instant, his face but partially visible, and with merely the portion of a name; he had now become a friend, almost a brother, to me – for new sympathies had been awakened in my heart besides those which had formerly been inspired by the recital of the expedition to Whitehaven. These led me to reflect that whatever of interest and disappointment I had experienced on reading' Cooper's novel, they must have been entertained alike by others, and that the anxious desire I had felt to know more of the former lover of Alice Dunscombe was not a feeling peculiar to myself, but would be participated by all those, and their number must be great, who have followed this skilful seaman from the moment of his first meeting Lieutenant Barnstaple on the English cliffs, until that in which he quitted the *Alert* to land on the shores of Holland.

I have, therefore, gathered up my recollections, and have written this history.

CHAPTER I – A STRANGE SAIL

Hoarse o'er her side the rustling cable rings-
The sails are furled – and anchoring, round she swings;
And gathering loiterers on the land discern
Her boat descending from the latticed stern.
'Tis mann'd – the oars keep concert to the strand,
Till grates her keel upon the shallow sand. – Byron.

Toward the close of a fine evening in the month of October, 1779, the most inquisitive among the inhabitants of the small town of Fort Louis, had assembled on the point of land immediately opposite to that on which stands the city of Lorient. The object which attracted their attention, and which was the subject of their inquiries, was a noble beautiful frigate, carrying 32 guns, which had been anchored for about a week, not in the port, but in a small cove in the roadstead, and which had been perceived for the first time early one morning, like an ocean flower which had suddenly blossomed during the night. From the elegant and coquettish appearance of this frigate, it was imagined that this was the first time of her putting to sea; she bore the French flag, for the three golden *fleur-de-lis* were seen glittering in the last rays of the setting sun.

That which, above all, appeared to excite the curiosity of the admirers of this spectacle, so frequent, and notwithstanding, always so interesting in a seaport, was the uncertainty as to the country in which this vessel had been built; for, having all her sails clewed up and snugly stowed around her yards, showed in the setting sun the graceful outline of her hull, and a minute elegance as to her running rigging. Some thought they could discern in her the bold and taunt masts used by the Americans, but the perfection exemplified in the finish which distinguished the rest of her construction, was in perfect contrast with the barbarous rudeness of those rebellious children of England. Others, deceived by the flag she had hoisted, were endeavouring to divine in what port of France she had been launched, but their national pride soon gave way to the conviction that she was not built in France, for they sought in vain for those heavy galleries, ornamented with sculpture, which is the compulsory decoration of the stern of every daughter of the ocean, or of the Mediterranean, born on the stocks of Brest or of Toulon; others, again, knowing that the flags were frequently used as a mask to hide the real face, maintained that the lion and the towers of Spain would have more properly been placed upon the ensign waving from her peak, than the three *fleur-de-lis* of France: but the latter were asked whether the straight and elegant sides and quarters of the frigate all resembled the bulging build of Spanish galleons. In short, there were some among them who would have sworn that this beautiful fairy of the waters had been brought to life among the frogs of Holland, had not the dangerous boldness of her masts and rigging fully contradicted the suggestion that she could have been built by those old but prudent sweepers of the seas. But, as we have said, for eight whole days, and ever since the first appearance of this splendid vision upon the coast of Brittany, she had been the constant theme of wonder and of conversation, for nothing had happened to give them any positive information, as not an individual from the crew had landed from the ship, under any pretext whatever. They might, indeed, have doubted whether she had a crew or not, had not they now and then seen the head of a sentinel, or of the officer of the watch, peering above the bulwarks. It appeared, however, that this vessel, although she had not communicated with the shore, could not have any hostile intention; her arrival had not seemed to give the least uneasiness to the public authorities of Lorient, for she had run under the guns of a small fort, which the recent declaration of war between England and France had caused to be put in order, and which displayed a battery of long guns of heavy calibre.

Among this crowd of idlers, however, there was a young man, who was remarked for the anxious eagerness of his inquiries: – without any one being able to devise the cause, it was easily perceived that he felt some direct interest in this mysterious vessel. His brilliant uniform was that of the *mousquetaires*, and as these royal guards rarely left the capital, he had, at first, directed a portion of the public curiosity to himself, but it was soon discovered that this person, whom they thought a stranger, was the young Count d'Auray, the last scion of one of the most ancient families of Brittany. The castle inhabited by his family rose above the shores of the Golf of Morbihan, at six or seven leagues, distance from Fort Louis. The family consisted of the Marquis d'Auray, a poor insane old man, who for twenty years had never been seen beyond the boundaries of his estates; of the Marchioness d'Auray, whose rigid morality, and whose ancient nobility, could alone excuse her haughty and aristocratic bearing; of the young Marquerite, a sweet girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age, delicate and pale as the flower whose name she bore; and of Count Emanuel, whom we have mentioned above, and around whom the crowd had gathered, carried away, as it always is, by a sounding title, a brilliant uniform, and noble and lordly manners.

However eager might have been the desire of those he addressed to satisfy his curiosity, they could only answer his questions in a vague and undecided manner; all they knew of the frigate being mere conjecture. The count was about retiring from the jetty, when he perceived a six-oared boat approaching it. At a moment when curiosity had been so much excited, this incident could not fail to attract all eyes. In the stern of the boat sat a young man, who appeared to be from twenty to twenty-two years of age, and who was dressed in the uniform of a lieutenant of the royal navy – he was sitting, or rather lying, upon a bearskin, one hand reclining carelessly on the tiller of the small boat, while the coxswain, who, thanks to the caprice of his officer, had nothing to do, was sitting in the bow. From the moment that it first made its appearance, every eye was directed towards it, as if it contained the means of solving the mystery which had so much puzzled them. The boat, urged on by the last efforts of its oarsmen, took the ground at eight or ten feet distance from the beach, there being too little water in that place to allow it to come nearer. Two of the sailors jumped into the sea up to their knees. The young lieutenant then rose up in a careless way, walked to the bow of the boat, and allowed the two sailors to carry him in their arms to the beach, so that not a drop of salt water should soil his elegant uniform. He then ordered his men to double the point of land which advanced about three hundred feet into the sea, and to go and wait for him on the opposite side of the battery. As for himself, he stopped a moment on the beach to arrange his dress, which had been a little disordered by the rough mode of transport he had been compelled to adopt, and then he advanced, humming a French air, towards the gate of a small fort, which he passed, after having slightly returned the military salute of the sentinel on duty.

Although nothing could, in a seaport, be more natural than that a naval officer should cross the roads and walk into a fort, the minds of the lookers-on had been so much occupied with the foreign vessel, that there was hardly one among the crowd who did not imagine that this visit to the commandant of the fort had some relation to her, so that when the young officer issued from it, he found himself surrounded so closely by the crowd, that for a moment he appeared half inclined to use the rattan which he carried in his hand, to make way through it. However after having flourished it with impertinent affectation above the heads of those who were nearest him, he appeared all at once to change his mind, and perceiving Count Emanuel, whose distinguished appearance, and elegant uniform, contrasted strikingly with the vulgar air and habiliments of the persons who surrounded him, he made a few steps towards him at the same moment that the count had advanced to meet him. The two officers merely exchanged a rapid glance, but that look at once assured both that they were persons of rank and station. They immediately saluted each other with that easy grace and affable politeness which characterized the young nobility of that period.

"By Heaven!" exclaimed the young midshipman; "my dear countryman, for I suppose that like myself you are a Frenchman, although I meet you in a seemingly hyperborean land, and in regions

which, if not absolutely savage, appear sufficiently barbarous – will you have the goodness to tell me what there is so extraordinary about me, that I seem to cause quite a revolution in the country? Or is the appearance of an officer of the navy an event so rare and so extraordinary at Lorient, that his mere presence excites, in so singular a degree, the curiosity of the natives of Lower Brittany? By solving this mystery, you will render me a service which I shall be happy to reciprocate, should any opportunity present itself in which I can be useful to you."

"This will be so much the more easy," replied Count Emanuel, "as this curiosity is not founded in any feeling which you would consider offensive to your uniform or hostile to your person – and the proof of this is, my dear comrade – for I see by your epaulettes that we are of equal rank in the service of his majesty – that I participate with these honest Britons in the curiosity which they evince, although, perhaps, my motives are more weighty than theirs, in endeavouring to obtain a solution of the problem which has occupied us."

"If I can be of any assistance to you, in the inquiries which you have undertaken, I place all the algebra I possess at your disposal. Only the position we are in is not a comfortable one to carry out mathematical demonstrations. Will it please you to remove to a small distance from these honest people, whose presence would only tend to confuse our calculations."

"Certainly," replied the mousquetaire, "and the more readily, as, if I do not deceive myself, by walking this way I shall lead you nearer to your boat and your sailors."

"Oh! that is not of the slightest consequence; should this path not be convenient to you we can take another. I have plenty of time; and my men are less eager to, return on board than I am. Therefore, we will about ship, if such is your good pleasure."

"Not at all; on the contrary, let us go on, the nearer we are to the beach the better we can discuss the matter in question. Let us, therefore, walk upon this strip of land as far as we can."

The young seamen, without replying a word, continued to walk on, like a man to whom the direction he was to take was perfectly indifferent, and these two young men, who had thus met for the first time, walked arm in arm, as though they had been friends from infancy, towards the end of the promontory. When they had reached the extreme point, Count Emanuel paused, and pointed towards the frigate, saying, "Do you know what ship that is?"

The young seaman threw a rapid and scrutinizing glance upon the mousquetaire, and then looked towards the ship: "Yes," replied he, negligently, "it is a pretty frigate carrying two and thirty guns, with her sails bent and her starboard anchor afloat, ready to sail at the first signal given."

"Excuse me," replied Emanuel, smiling; "that is not what I ask of you. It signifies little to me how many guns she carries, or by what anchor she is holding – is not that your technical mode of speaking?"

The lieutenant smiled: in turn. "But," continued Emanuel, "what I wish to know is, to what nation she actually belongs, the port, that she is bound to, and the name of her captain."

"As to the nation she belongs to," replied the lieutenant,

"She has taken care to give us that information herself, or she is, an outrageous liar; Do you not see her flag flying from her peak? It is the flag without a stain, rather worn out from being too much used that's all. As to the place she is bound to, it is as the commandant of the fort told you, when, you asked him, – Mexico." Emanuel looked with astonishment at the young lieutenant. "And finally, as to her captain, that is a much more difficult matter.. There are some people who would swear he is a young man about my own age or yours, for; I, believe we left the cradle pretty closely the one after, the other, although the professions we follow may place a long interval between our graves. There are others who pretend he is of the same age with my uncle the Count d'Estaing, who as you doubtless know, has just been made an admiral, and who is at: this moment affording every assistance to the rebels of America, as some people, even in France, still call them. But, in short, as to his name, that is quite another thing; it is said he does not know it himself; and until some fortunate occurrence shall apprise him of it, he calls himself Paul."

"Paul?"

"Yes, Captain Paul."

"Paul, what?"

"Paul, of the *Providence*, of the *Banger*, of the *Alliance*, according to the name of the ship he commands. Are there not also in France some of our young nobles, who, finding their family name too short, lengthen it out by the name of an estate, and surmount the whole with a knight's casque, or a baron's coronet: so that their seals or their carriages bear the evidence of belonging to some ancient family, quite delightful to reflect upon? Well! so it is with him. At this moment he calls himself, I believe, Paul, of the *Indienne*, and he is proud of the appellation; if I may judge from my naval sympathies, I do not think he would exchange his frigate for the finest estate to be found between the Port of Brest and the mouth of the Rhone."

"But, tell me," rejoined Emanuel, after reflecting for a moment on the singular mixture of simplicity and sarcasm which pervaded the answers of his companion; "what is the character of this man?"

"His character – but, my dear baron – count – marquis" —

"Count," replied Emanuel, bowing.

"Well, my dear count, then, I was about to say that you pursued me from one abstraction to another, and that when I placed at your disposal all my knowledge in algebra, I did not intend that we should enter into a research of the unknown. His character! good heaven, my dear count, who can speak knowingly of the character of a man, unless it be himself – and even then – but hold – I, myself, as you now see me, have ploughed for twenty years, at one time with the keel of a brig, at another with that of a frigate, this vast expanse, which now extends itself before us. My eyes, for so I may express myself, discerned the ocean almost at the same moment that they saw the sky above it; since my tongue was able to join two words together, or my comprehension could combine two ideas, I have interrogated and studied the caprices of the ocean, and yet I do not, even to this time, know its character – and there are only four principal winds and thirty-two breezes which agitate it – that's all. How, then, can you expect that I should judge of man, torn as he is by his thousand passions."

"Nor did I ask you, my dear – duke – marquis – count?" —

"Lieutenant," replied the young sailor, bowing, as Emanuel had done before.

"I was about to say, then, my dear lieutenant, I do not ask a physiological lecture on the passions of Captain Paul. I only wish to inform myself upon two points. Firstly, whether you consider him a man of honor?"

"We must first of all understand each other as to the meaning of words, my dear count – what is your precise definition of the word honor?"

"Permit me to remark, my dear lieutenant, that this question is a most singular one. Honor! Why, honor – is – honor."

"That's it precisely – a word without a definition, like the word God! God – is God! and every one creates a God after his own fashion. The Egyptians adored him under the form of a scorpion – the Israelites, under that of a golden calf. So it is with honor. There is the honor of Camillus, and that of Coriolanus – that of the Cid, and that of Count Julian. Define your question better if you wish me to reply to it."

"I ask, then, whether his word may be relied upon?"

"I do not believe he ever failed in that regard. His enemies – and no one can arrive to his station without having them – even his enemies, I say, have never doubted that he would keep, even unto death, an oath which he had sworn to. This point is, therefore, believe me, fully settled. In this respect, he is a man of *honor*. Let us pass, therefore, to your second question, for if I do not deceive myself, you wish to know something farther."

"Yes, I wish to know whether he would faithfully obey an order given by his Majesty?"

"What Majesty?"

"Really, my dear lieutenant, you affect a difficulty of comprehension which would better suit the gown of a sophist, than a naval uniform."

"Why so? You accuse me of cavilling, because, before replying, I wish to know precisely what I have to answer. We have, at this? present time, eight or ten majesties, seated securely or otherwise, upon the different thrones of Europe. We have his Catholic Majesty – a feeble majesty, who allows the inheritance, left him by Charles, the Fifth, to be torn from him piece by piece; – we have his Britannic Majesty – a headstrong majesty, who clings to his America, as Cyngetus to the Persian ship, and whose hands we shall cut off, if he does not loose his hold; – we have his Christian Majesty, whom I venerate and honor" —

"Well – it is of him I wish to speak," said Emanuel,

"Do you believe that Captain Paul would feel disposed to obey an order which I should deliver from him?"

"Captain Paul," replied the lieutenant, "would, as every captain ought to do, obey every order emanating from a power which has the right of commanding him – unless indeed he be an accursed pirate, or some damned privateersman, some buccaneer, who owes no allegiance, and which I should doubt from the appearance of the frigate he commands, and from the way she is fitted. He must have then in some drawer of his cabin, a commission signed by some power or other. Well! should this commission bear the name of Louis, and be sealed with the fleur-de-lis of France, there can be no doubt that he would obey any order sealed, and signed by the same name."

"This is all then that I wish to be informed of," replied the young mousquetaire, who began to grow impatient at the strange and evasive answers given by his companion. "I will only ask you one more question." "I am ready to obey your wishes in that, as I have in the rest, count," returned the lieutenant.

"Do you know any way of getting on board of that ship?"

"There is one," replied the lieutenant, pointing towards his own boat, which lay rocked, by the waves, in a small creek close to them.

"That boat! why, is it yours?"

"Well! I will take you on board."

"You know this Captain Paul, then?"

"I? not in the least! But as nephew of an admiral, I am naturally acquainted with every officer of a ship, from a boatswain, who pipes the hands aloft, to the rear admiral, who commands a squadron. Besides which, we sailors have secret signs among us, a certain masonic language, by which we know one another as brothers in whatever part of the ocean we may meet. You may, therefore, accept my proposal with the same frankness in which I offer it. I, my rowers, and my boat, are at your disposal."

"Do me this service, then," said Emanuel, "and" —

"You will forgive me the annoyance I have caused by my tergiversations, will you not?" said the lieutenant. "You cannot be surprised at it," continued he smiling, "my dear count, the solicitude of a seaman's life has given to us children of the sea, the habit of soliloquising. During a calm, we invoke the winds! During the tempest, we invoke the calm; and during the night we address ourselves to God."

Emanuel again looked doubtingly at his companion, who met his gaze with that apparent good tempered simplicity, which had appeared to spread over his features every time he had become the object of investigation, to the mousquetaire. The latter was surprised at this mixture of contempt for human things, and of poetic feeling toward the works of God. But finding that this singular man was disposed to render him, although in a strange manner, the service he had asked of him, he accepted his proffered assistance. Five minutes afterwards, the two young men were advancing towards the unknown vessel with as much rapidity as the vigor of six stout rowers could give to the light bark in which they were seated. Their oars rose and fell with so regular a movement, that it appeared rather impelled by some powerful machine, than by the combination of human strength.

CHAPTER II. – THE FRIGATE

And oh! the little warlike world within!
The well-reeved guns, the netted canopy;
The hoarse command, the busy humming din-
When, at a word, the tops are mann'd on high,
Hark to the boatswain's call, the cheering cry;
While through the seaman's hands the tackle glides:
Or schoolboy midshipman that, standing by,
Strains his shrill pipe, as good or ill betides,
And well the docile crew that skilful urchin guides. – Byron.

As they advanced, the graceful form of the ship became more and more clearly defined, and although the vocation of the count did not lead him to admire beauty under such a form, yet he could not avoid being struck by the graceful model of her construction, the loftiness and strength of her masts, and the elegance of her rigging, which appeared, as it stood out against the richly tinted sky, reddened by the setting sun, to be composed of flexible and silky fibres, spun by some gigantic spider. There was not, however, any appearance of movement on board the ship, which seemed, either from inattention or contempt, to care but little for the visit she was about to receive. The young mousquetaire thought, however, at one moment, that he perceived the end of a telescope peeping out of one of the port-holes, near the muzzle of a gun, and which was pointed towards the boat; but the ship being gently moved round by the quiet heaving of the waves, presented her prow toward them, his attention was attracted by the figure-head which generally bears some allusion to the name of the vessel that it decorates: it was a representation of one of the daughters of America, discovered by Columbus, and conquered by Cortez, with a head-dress of many colored feathers, her bosom naked, and ornamented with a coral necklace. As to the remainder of the figure, it was a curious combination, half syren, half serpent, attached to the fore part of the ship in a graceful though fantastic form. The nearer the boat approached the ship, the more did the attention of the count appear attracted by this figure. It was, in fact, a sculpture, not only singular as to form, but very remarkable from the finish of its execution; and it was easy to perceive, that it was not the work of vulgar hands, but had been carved by a superior artist. The lieutenant remarked, with the satisfaction of a seaman, the increasing admiration which appeared in the countenance of the soldier; and at last perceiving that his attention was concentrated in the figure-head we have described, he seemed to wait with impatience that the latter should express his opinion upon it; but finding that he did not give any, although they were near enough not to lose any of its beauties, he took upon himself to be the first to speak, and to question his young companion.

"Well, count," said he, concealing the interest which he took in his reply under an apparent gaiety, "what do you think of this master-piece?"

"I think," replied Emanuel, "that comparing it with works of the same description, which I have seen, it merits the appellation which you have given it."

"Yes," said the lieutenant, carelessly, "it is the last work of William Coustou, who died before he had completed it: it was finished by one of his pupils, named Duprè, a man of genius, who is starving, and who is obliged to carve wood for want of marble, and to cut figure-heads of ships, when he ought to be employed in sculpturing statues. See," said he, giving an impulsion to the rudder which laid then across her bows, "it is a real necklace of coral that she wears, and they are real pearls that are hanging from her ears. As to her eyes, each pupil is a diamond worth a hundred guineas.

The captain who takes this frigate, will, besides the honor of capturing her, have a splendid wedding present to offer to his bride."

"What an odd caprice," exclaimed Emanuel, carried away by the singularity of the object he was gazing at, "to ornament a ship in the same way that one would an animated, being, and to risk considerable sums to the chances of a battle, or the dangers of a storm."

"Why should this astonish you?" said the lieutenant with an accent of indescribable melancholy; "we seamen have no other family than our sailors, no other country but the ocean, no gorgeous pageants but the tempest, no amusements but the battle. We must attach ourselves to something, having no real mistresses, for who would love us sea-gulls, who are always on the wing? We must therefore shape to ourselves an imaginary love. The one becomes enamoured of some verdant and shady island, and every time he perceives one in the distance, rising from the ocean like a flower garden, his heart becomes as joyous as that of a bird, when returning to its nest. Another selects some favorite star from out the firmament, and during the long and lovely nights on the Atlantic, every time he passes the equator, it appears to him that it approaches nearer to him, and salutes him with a more vivid light. There are others, and they are the greater number, who attach themselves to their frigate as to a well beloved daughter, who groan whenever the tempest tears away any part of her, at every wound given by the shot that strikes her, and when she is at length sunk by the tempest or the combat, prefer to perish with her, rather than to save themselves without her, giving to landsmen a holy example of fidelity. Captain Paul is one of the latter class, that's all, and he has given to his frigate the wedding present which he had intended for his bride. Ah? I see they are waking up."

"Boat ahoy?" cried some one from on board the frigate, "what boat's that?"

"We want to come on board," replied Emanuel; "throw us a rope that we may catch hold of."

"Go round to the starboard side, and you will find the gangway ladder."

The sailors pulled round, and in a few seconds the two young men were going up the ship's side. The officer of the watch came forward with an eagerness which appeared in Emanuel's mind to promise well.

"Sir," said the lieutenant to a young man who was dressed in the same uniform as himself, and appeared to be of the same rank, "this is my friend, the Count – By the by, I forgot to ask your name?"

"Count Emanuel d'Auray."

"I was saying then, that this is my friend, the Count Emanuel d'Auray, who anxiously desires to speak to Captain Paul. Is he on board?"

"He has just this moment arrived," replied the officer.

"In that case I will go below and prepare him to receive you, my dear count. In the meantime, this is Mr. Walter, who will have the pleasure of showing you through the ship. It is an interesting sight for a land officer, and the more so, as I doubt whether you would find many ships kept in such order as this is. The people are at supper just now, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"In that case it will be the more curious sight."

"But," observed the officer, hesitating a little, "it is my watch on deck."

"Bah! you can easily find one of your brother officers who will relieve you for a short time. I will endeavour to manage so that the captain shall not make you kick your heels too long in the ante-room. Adieu, till I meet you again, count: I shall recommend you in such a way as will insure a good reception for you." With these words, the young lieutenant disappeared down the companion ladder, while the one who remained with Emanuel to show him over the ship, took him into the 'tween decks.

As the lieutenant had presumed, the crew of the frigate were at their supper. It was the first time that the young count had been present at such a repast; and however much he desired to speak immediately to the captain, he felt so curious to observe what was going on, that he examined everything with eager attention.

Between every two guns, a table and benches were prepared, not standing on their feet, but slung by ropes from above. Four men were seated upon each of the benches, taking their portion of pieces of beef, which seemed to resist the action of their knives, but which had to do with hearty fellows who did not appear at all disposed to be daunted by its toughness. At every table there were two cans of wine, that is to say, about a pint for each man. As to the bread, it did not appear to be distributed by rations, but they could take as much as they wanted. The most profound silence reigned throughout the crew, which, was composed of more than from one hundred and eighty to two hundred men.

Although none of those seated at the table, opened their mouths for any other purpose than to eat, Emanuel perceived, with some surprise, that they were composed of many different nations, which was easily discernible from the contour of their countenances. His *cicerone* remarked his astonishment, and replying to his thought before he had given utterance to it, said, with an American accent, which Emanuel had already observed, and which proved that he who spoke to him was born on the other side of the Atlantic: "Yes, yes, we have a tolerably pretty sample of every nation in the world, and if all at once a good deluge should carry off the children of Noah, as it formerly did those of Adam, our ark could furnish people who speak every language. Do you observe those three fellows who are exchanging a piece of roast beef for a clove of garlick, they are lads from Galicia, whom we picked up at Cape Ortegal, and who would not go into action without having said a prayer to St Jago, of Corapostello, but who, when once their prayer is over, would rather allow themselves to be cut in pieces, like martyrs, than retreat a single step. Those two who are polishing their table at the expense of their jacket-sleeves, are honest Dutchmen, who still complain: of the injury done to their commerce by the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope. You see them – at first sight they look like very beer-pots. Well, those brave fellows, the moment they hear the drum beat to quarters, become as active as monkeys; Go near them, and they will talk to you about their ancestors; they will tell you they descend from those famous sweepers of the sea, who when going into action, hoisted a broom instead of a flag; but they will take good care not to inform you that one fine morning the English took their broom, and made rods of it to whip them with. That whole table, where they are chattering together at such a rate, but in an under tone, is occupied by Frenchmen, who would talk louder if they dared. The seat of honor is occupied by a chief, elected by themselves; he is a Parisian by birth, a cosmopolite from taste, a great master at the small sword, singlestick, and a dancing-master to boot. Always gay and contented, he sings when he is on duty, sings when he is fighting, and will die singing, unless a hemp cravat should stop his voice, which may very likely happen to him should he have the misfortune to fall into the hands of John Bull. Turn your eyes to the other side now, and observe that row of square and idle heads. These are strange faces to you, are they not? but which every American born between Hudson's Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, would recognize at once for bears born on: the borders of Lake Erie, or seals from Nova Scotia.. There are three, or four of them who are one eyed – this arises from, their peculiar mode of fighting; they twist their fingers in the hair of their antagonist, and gouge out his eye with their thumbs. There are some of them who are very expert at this exercise, and who never miss their mark. So that when they are boarding a ship, they almost invariable throw away their boarding, pikes, or their cutlass, and seizing the first Englishman they can catch hold of, they uneye him with a dexterity and quickness quite delightful to behold. You will now comprehend that I did not deceive you in what I said, and that our collection is complete."

"But," asked Emanuel, who had listened to this long enumeration with a certain degree of interest, "how does your captain manage to make himself understood by men brought together from such distant nations?"

"First of all our captain understands all languages – and although in battle and during stormy weather he speaks his mother tongue, he; gives such an accent to it that every one understands him and obeys: him. But see, the larboard cabin door is opening, and I doubt not he is ready to-receive you."

And instantly a boy dressed in a midshipman's uniform came up to the two officers, and asked Emanuel if he did not call himself the Count d'Auray; and on his receiving an affirmative reply, he requested him to follow him; and the officer who had so conscientiously sustained the part of a cicerone, immediately went on deck to resume his duties there. As to Emanuel, he advanced towards the cabin with a mixed feeling of anxiety and curiosity. He was at last about to be ushered in the presence of Captain Paul.

He was a man who appeared to be between fifty and fifty-five years of age, and to whom the habit of walking between decks had given him a stoop rather than age. He wore the uniform of the French navy, according to its strictest regulations. It was a blue coat with scarlet facings, a red waistcoat, and breeches of the same color, grey stockings, with frilled shirt and ruffles. His hair, rolled up in large curls, and powdered quite white, was tied into a queue by a ribbon, the ends of which floated upon his shoulders. His cocked hat and his sword were lying upon a table beside him. At the moment Emanuel entered the door, he was sitting upon the carriage of a gun, but when he perceived him, he rose up to receive him.

The young count felt intimidated by the aspect of this man: there was in his eye a searching look which appeared to peer into the very soul of the person whom he gazed upon. Perhaps, also, this impression was the more powerful, that he presented himself before him with a conscience that reproached him with the act he was endeavouring to accomplish, and of which he was about to render the captain, if not an accomplice, at all events the executioner. These two men, as though they felt a secret repulsion, the one towards the other, saluted each other with politeness, but with cold reserve.

"It is the Count d'Auray that I have the honor of addressing," said the old officer.

"And I Captain Paul, I believe," replied the young mousquetaire; they both bowed a second time.

"May I know to what fortunate chance I owe the honor," rejoined the captain, "of the visit which is now paid to me by the heir of one of the oldest and greatest families in Brittany?"

Emanuel bowed again by way of thanks for this compliment, and then, after hesitating for a moment as if he found it difficult to open the conversation, he observed: "I am told, Captain Paul, that you are bound to the Gulf of Mexico?"

"And you have not been deceived, sir; I purpose sailing for New Orleans, calling on my way at Cayenne, and at the Havannah."

"This falls out very fortunately, captain, and you will not have to alter your course, in case you should be willing to undertake the execution of the order of which I am the bearer."

"You have an order to communicate to me, sir, and from whom?"

"From the Minister of Marine."

"An order addressed to me personally?" reiterated the captain, doubtingly.

"Not personally to you, sir; but to any captain of the royal navy, who may be about to sail for South America."

"Of what nature is it, count?"

"A state prisoner to be transported to Cayenne."

"And you have the order with you?"

"Here it is," replied Emanuel, taking it from his pocket, and presenting it to the captain.

He took the paper, and going near the cabin window, that he might avail himself of the last gleam of daylight, he read aloud:

"The Ministers of Marine and of the Colonies, orders any captain or lieutenant, commanding a government vessel, who may be about to sail for South America, or for the Gulf of Mexico, to take on board his ship and to land at Cayenne, the person named Lusignan, condemned to transportation for life. During the passage the convict shall take his meals in his own cabin, and shall not be allowed to have any communication with the ship's company."

"Is the order in due form?" asked Emanuel.

"Perfectly, sir," replied the captain. "And are you disposed to execute it?"

"Am I not under the orders of the Minister of Marine?"

"The prisoner may then be sent to you?"

"Whenever you will; but it had better be this evening, or as soon as possible, as I do not expect to be long in these roads."

"I will take care that due diligence shall be used."

"Is this all that you have to say to me?"

"Nothing further, excepting to add my thanks."

"Do not add anything, sir. The minister orders, and I obey, that's all. It is a duty which I fulfil, and not a service that I am rendering."

Upon these words, the captain and the count bowed to each other and separated, more coldly even than they had met.

When he reached the deck, Emanuel asked the officer of the watch for his friend who had accompanied him on board, but was informed he had been detained by Captain Paul to sup with him, and that being anxious to oblige the count, he had placed his boat at his disposal.

She was waiting alongside the ship, and the sailors were in readiness to accompany him. Emanuel had scarcely got into her when they rowed him away with a rapidity equal to that with which they had conducted him on board. But this time she proceeded in sorrowful silence, for the young lieutenant was no longer there to animate the count with his practical philosophy.

That same night the prisoner was conducted on board the *Indienne*, and the next morning at day-break the inquisitive inhabitants of the coast no longer discerned the frigate which had given rise to so many conjectures, and whose unexpected arrival, her remaining there without any apparent object, and her spontaneous departure, remained an inexplicable mystery to the inhabitants of Fort Louis.

CHAPTER III. – THE SEA FIGHT

The gallant vessels side by side did lie,
Yard-arm and yard-arm, and the murd'rous guns
Belch'd forth their flame and shot, 'till the white decks
Ran like a sea with blood. Uncertain still
The victory stood, 'till Perry, waving
His bright sword o'er his head, cried, "Follow me!"
A hundred shouts responded to this call,
Then with one spring he bounded on the deck
Of his determined foe. – Oxd Play.

As the motives which had induced Captain Paul to visit the coast of Brittany had no relation with our history, excepting as far as regards the events which we have related, we shall leave our readers in the same state of uncertainty as were the inhabitants of Fort Louis; and although our vocation and our sympathies naturally incline us to terra-firma, we must follow our hero for a few days in his adventurous course upon the ocean. The weather was as beautiful as it generally is on the western coast of France, at the commencement of autumn. The *Indienne* sailed gaily on with as fair a wind as could blow for her. The ship's crew, excepting those actually employed in manoeuvring the vessel, were availing themselves of the fine weather and occupied in their own matters, as caprice directed them, or were idly lounging about the ship, when all at once a voice which appeared to descend from the sky, called out, "Below, there!"

"Hullo, there!" replied the quarter-master, who was standing near the helm.

"Sail, ho!" cried the seaman who was on the lookout, at the head-mast.

"Sail, ho!" repeated the quarter-master. "Officer of the deck, be so good as to inform the captain there is a sail in sight."

"A sail! a sail!" re-echoed the crew from different parts of the deck; for at that moment a wave, having raised the vessel which appeared upon the horizon, had for an instant rendered her visible to the eyes of the ship's company.

"A sail!" exclaimed a young man of five-and-twenty, springing upon the quarter deck from the cabin stairs; "ask Mr Arthur what he thinks of her."

"Mast head, there!" cried the lieutenant, using his speaking trumpet; "the captain wants to know, Mr. Arthur, what you make of the strange sail."

Arthur, the young midshipman, had gone aloft immediately upon hearing a sail announced. He replied, "She looks like a large square-rigged vessel, close hauled, and steering for us."

"Yes, yes," said the young man, to whom Walter had given the title of captain, "she has as good eyes as we have, and she has seen us."

"Very well, if she wishes for a little chat, she will find us ready to talk to her. Besides, our guns must be almost choked from having their mouths stopped so long."

After some little time, the midshipman again hailed the officer on deck, and told him that the strange ship had just set her mainsail, and had altered her course a little, so as to cross their bow.

"Sir," said the captain, addressing the lieutenant, "get ready to beat to quarters, we must prepare for this fellow; he looks rather suspicious." And then calling out to the midshipman, "How does the ship seem to sail, Mr. Arthur? what do you think of her?"

"She seems to be a fast sailer, and is a man-of-war, I should think, by the squareness of her yards; and although I cannot see her flag, I would wager that she bears King George's commission."

"I should not wonder," observed the captain to the first lieutenant, "and that she has orders to give chase to a certain frigate called the *Indienne*, and that her commander is promised good promotion should he succeed in capturing her. Ha! ha! now she is loosing her top gallant sails. The blood hound has scented us, and is decidedly about to give us chase. Set our top gallant sails, too, Mr. Walter, and let us keep our course without varying a point. We shall see whether they will dare to come athwart our hawse."

The captain's orders were instantly repeated by the lieutenant, and in a few minutes the ship which had been running under her top sails, felt the influence of her top gallant sails, heeled over under this new pressure and bounded along as if animated by the sight of an enemy, and dashing away the spray from either bow with eager impetuosity.

For some time there was hardly a word uttered on board. Every one appeared to wait anxiously the termination of this state of suspense, and we shall profit by this momentary quiet, to call the attention of our readers to the person of the officer to whom the lieutenant had given the title of captain.

It was no longer either the young and sceptical lieutenant whom we have seen accompanying the Count d'Auray on board the ship, nor the old sea-wolf with his stooping gait, and harsh and snappish answers, who had received him in the cabin. He was a handsome young man, from twenty to twenty-five years of age, as we have said before, who, having thrown off all disguise, appeared at length in his own person, and dressed in the fanciful uniform which he always wore when upon the wide ocean. It was a sort of great coat of black velvet, with gold shoulder knots and fastened with hooks and eyes of the same metal. Round his waist he wore a Turkish belt, in which was placed a pair of elegant duelling pistols, richly inlaid and ornamented, apparently more for show than defence. His pantaloons were of white kerseymere, with boots which reached nearly to his knees. Round his neck, a cravat of transparent India muslin, embroidered with flowers in their natural colors, was loosely tied; his hair, no longer disfigured by powder, and black as ebony, flowed about his cheeks, which were tanned by exposure to the sun; his eyes beamed with hope and animation. Near him, upon a gun, was placed a steel helmet which fastened by a curb chain under the chin. This was his battle dress, and the only defensive armour which he wore. Some deep indentations in his helmet proved that it had more than once saved the head which it protected from those severe wounds inflicted by those terrible cutlasses used by seamen when boarding. As to the ship's company, they wore the elegant though plain uniform of the French navy.

During this time, the vessel which had been described by the man at the mast head, and which had then appeared like a white speck upon the horizon, had become, little by little, a pyramid of sails and rigging. All eyes were fixed upon her, and although no order had been actually given, every one of the crew had taken the position which individually belonged to him, as though it had been determined that a combat should take place. There reigned then on board the *Indienne* that solemn and profound silence, which in a ship of war always precedes the decisive orders of the captain. Finally, the hull of the strange sail appeared rising out of the water, as her sails had successively done before. It was then clearly discernible that she was a larger ship than the *Indienne*, and that she carried thirty-six guns. She, however, showed no colors, and as her crew were carefully and completely concealed behind her bulwarks, it was impossible to ascertain, unless by some particular indications, to what nation she belonged. These two observations were made almost at the same moment by Captain Paul; the last, however, seemed to strike him the most forcibly.

"It appears," said he, addressing his lieutenant, "that we are going to have a scene of a masked ball. Order Arthur to bring us a few flags, and let us prove to this unknown, that the *Indienne* has several disguises at her disposal. And then, Mr. Walter, give orders that cutlasses and boarding pikes be distributed, for we can hardly expect, in these seas, to meet with any but enemy's ships."

The two orders were executed; as soon as given. In an instant the young midshipman had brought on deck a dozen flags of different nations, and Lieutenant Walter, having had the arm chest

opened, had boarding pikes piled in different positions throughout the ship, and had distributed cutlasses and axes to the ship's company, he then returned to his place by the Captain's side. Every man again resumed his post by instinct rather than by order, for they had not yet beat to quarters; so that the apparent confusion which had existed for a moment ceased at once, and the frigate became once more, as it were, silent and attentive.

However, the two ships following their converging directions, continued to approach each other. When they were about the distance of three gun shots, "Mr. Walter," said the Captain, "I think it is time we should begin to mistify our good friend here. Let us show him the old Scotch flag."

The lieutenant gave a sign to the quartermaster, and the red Lion of Scotland, on a blue field, rose like a flame to the peak of the *Indienne*; but nothing on board the enemy's ship gave evidence of their paying the slightest attention to this manœuvre.

"Yes, yes," murmured the captain, "the three leopards of England have so well filed the teeth and pared the claws of the Scottish lion, that they pay no attention to him, believing that he is tamed because he is defenceless. Show him some other color, Mr. Walter, and perhaps we shall succeed in loosening his tongue."

"What flag shall I hoist, captain?"

"Take the first one that comes; chance may perhaps favor us."

This order was scarcely given, when the Scotch flag was hauled down, and that of Sardinia took its place. The ship still remained mute.

"Well, well," said the captain, jestingly, "it appears that His Majesty, King George, is on good terms with his brother of Cyprus and Jerusalem. Do not let us bring them to loggerheads by carrying our joke farther, Mr. Walter, let us show the American flag, and prove that it is really the right one, by firing an unshotted gun."

The same manœuvre was repeated. The Sardinian flag was hauled down, and the stars of the United States rose slowly towards the sky, and were certified by firing a gun.

What the captain had foreseen then happened immediately on the display of this symbol of rebellion rising insolently in the air. The unknown ship immediately betrayed its incognita by hoisting the British flag. At the same moment a cloud of smoke was seen issuing from the side of the royalist ship, and before the report was heard, a cannon ball was seen tipping from wave to wave, and fell about a hundred yards short of the *Indienne*.

"Beat to quarters, Mr. Walter, for you see we have guessed rightly. Come, my boys," cried he, to the crew, "hurrah for America! and death to England!"

This was answered by a general shout, and had not ceased, when they heard them beating to quarters on board the *Drake*, for that was the name of the English ship. The drums of the *Indienne* immediately replied, and every man ran to his post: – the gunners to their guns, the officers to their stations, and the sailors to their running rigging. As to the captain, he jumped upon the top of the companion, his speaking trumpet in his hand – the supreme symbol, the sceptre of nautical royalty, which the commander always wields in the hour of combat or during the raging of the tempest.

They now seem to have made an exchange of parts, for the English appeared impatient, and the Americans affected calmness. The ships were hardly within gun shot, when a long line of smoke was seen issuing from the side of the English vessel, and a report similar to loud thunder was heard, and the iron messengers sent to deal death among the rebels, having in their impetuosity, miscalculated the distance, fell harmless before reaching the sides of the frigate. The latter, however, as if refusing to reply to so premature an attack, continued to haul to the wind, as if to spare the enemy too long a course.

At this moment the captain turned, as if to give a last look round his ship, and his astonished gaze was attracted by the appearance of a new personage on the deck, who had selected this dangerous and exciting moment to make his entrance upon the scene.

It was a young man, somewhere about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. His face was pale and mild; he was plainly, but elegantly dressed, and whom the captain had not before seen on board. He was leaning against the mizen-mast, his arms folded over his chest, and looking with melancholy indifference at the English vessel which was approaching them under a heavy press of canvas. The calmness at such a moment, and in a man who appeared a stranger to nautical combats, forcibly struck the captain. He then remembered the prisoner, whom the Count d'Auray had announced to him, and who had been brought on board during the last night he had passed at the anchorage of Port Louis.

"Who allowed you to come on deck, sir?" said he, softening as much as possible, the tone of his enquiry, so that it would have been difficult to ascertain whether this was addressed as a mere question, or as a reproach.

"No one, sir," replied the prisoner, in a soft and sorrowful voice; "but I had hoped that under the present circumstances, you would less severely observe the orders by which I became your prisoner."

"Have you forgotten that you were forbidden to hold any communication with the ship's company."

"I did not come here for the purpose of holding communication with the ship's company, sir; I came to see whether some friendly cannon ball would do me a good' turn."

"You may, but too soon, have your desire accomplished, if you remain where you are now standing; therefore, believe me, you had better remain below."

"Is this your advice; or an order, captain?"

"You have full liberty to construe it as you please."

"In that case," replied the young man, "I thank you – I will remain here."

At this instant, another loud report was heard; but the two ships had by this time neared each other so much, that they were within gun-shot, and the whole tempest of shot passed through the sails of the *Indienne*. Two splinters fell from the masts; and the groans and stifled cries of some of the ship's company were heard. The captain, at that moment, had his eyes fixed upon the prisoner, above whose head, a cannon ball had passed within two feet, grazing the mizen mast, against which he was leaning; but notwithstanding this death warning, he remained calm and unmoved, in the same attitude as if he had not felt the wing of the exterminating angel waft above his head. The captain knew how to appreciate courage – this incident was sufficient to assure him of the undaunted bravery of the man who stood before him.

"Tis well, sir," said he to him; "remain where you are, and when we come to boarding, if you should be tired of remaining with your arms crossed, take up a cutlass, or an axe, and give us a helping hand. You will excuse me not paying you more attention at this moment, for I have other things to do."

"Fire!" cried he, in a voice of thunder, through his speaking trumpet, "now, give it her: fire!"

"Fire!" repeated the officers like an echo, at their different stations.

At the instant, the *Indienne* trembled from her keel, to her royal mast head, as she poured her broadside into the enemy – a cloud of smoke spread itself like a veil, along the starboard-side, which was soon carried to leeward. The captain, standing upon the companion, impatiently awaited its clearing off, that he might ascertain the effect which the broadside had produced upon the enemy's vessel. When his gaze could penetrate through the smoke, he perceived that the enemy's main top mast had fallen, and had, with its sails, encumbered the after-part of the *Drake's* deck, and that her other sails were cut to ribbons. Then putting his speaking trumpet to his mouth, he cried —

"Well done! my lads. Now watch her closely. They will be too busy in clearing away the wreck of their mast, to think of raking us – fire – as you can – and this time shave close!"

The crew hastened to obey this order – the frigate veered round, and as the guns were brought to bear upon the enemy, they were discharged with terrible effect; and, as the captain had imagined,

without any hindrance from the Drake. The *Indienne* once more trembled like a volcano, and, as a volcano, vomited forth her flame and smoke.

This time the gunners had followed the orders of their captain to the letter, (and the broadside had been fired point blank) striking the hull and the lower masts. Both her masts were still standing; but on all sides the sails were hanging in tatters. It appeared that some more considerable damage had been done, which it was impossible to ascertain at that distance; for some time, the broadside was not returned; at length it was, and instead of raking the *Indienne*, it struck her in a diagonal direction. It was not the less terrible, for it swept off many a brave fellow from the deck; but by a chance which appeared positively magical, touched neither of the masts. Some of the running rigging was cut, but nothing that prevented her manoeuvring as before. At one glance, Paul ascertained that he had only lost some men. His heart bounded with joy. He once more placed the speaking-trumpet to his mouth.

"Larboard the helm," cried he, "and board her on the larboard side! Boarders, to your stations – be ready! Give her one more broadside."

At the first movement of the *Indienne*, the enemy at once perceived the intention, and endeavoured to neutralize it by it similar movement, but at the instant of attempting to execute it, a dreadful crash was heard on board her, and the mainmast, which had been nearly cut through by the last discharge from the *Indienne*, trembled, for a few seconds like an uprooted tree, and fell forward, covering the deck with the mainsail and the rigging. Captain Paul at once comprehended what had delayed the return of the broadside.

"Now, she is ours, my lads!" cried he; "we have only to take her. One last broadside within pistol shot, and then we'll board her!"

The *Indienne* obeyed her helm, as does a well trained horse the bridle, and unopposed, advanced towards her enemy, for the latter had no steerage-way upon her, and her guns were consequently useless. The Drake was therefore at the mercy of her adversary, who by remaining at a distance and playing at long bowls, might have riddled her and sunk her, but disdainng this too easy victory, sent in a last broadside; and then, before seeing the effect it had produced, the frigate ran in upon her larboard quarter, and threw her grappling-irons on board. On the instant, the tops and forecassle of the *Indienne* blazed as with fireworks on a holiday, and flaming grenades were showered upon the deck of the Drake with the rapidity of hailstones.

"Courage, my lads, courage, lash the bowsprit to her quarter rails. Well done! now, to your two forecassle carronades – fire!"

All these orders were executed with magical celerity: the two ships were as securely lashed together as if by iron chains – the two carronades which had not been fired during the combat, thundered in their turn, and swept the enemy's deck with a cloud of grape shot, and then another cry was heard, uttered by the same stentorian voice —

"Now, board her!!!"

And, adding example to precept, the captain of the *Indienne* threw aside his speaking trumpet, now of no longer use, placed his helmet on his head, fastening the clasp beneath his chin; placed the sabre which he usually wore in his belt between his teeth, and rushed upon the bowsprit to jump thence upon the deck of the enemy.

Although this movement followed the order he had given with as great rapidity as the thunder succeeds the lightning, he was only the second upon the English deck: he was preceded by the young prisoner with whom he had conversed, who had thrown aside his coat, and armed only with a hatchet, was the first to encounter death or victory.

"You are not conversant with the discipline of my ship," said Paul, laughing; "it is my place to be the first to board a ship I am attacking. I forgive you this time, but take care it does not again happen."

At the same instant, the seamen of the *Indienne* rushed from their own ship to the enemy's, taking advantage of every point of contact, some from the bowsprit, others from the end of the yards, and nettings, and fell upon the deck like ripe fruit falling from a tree when shaken by the wind. Then

the English, who had retreated to their forecastle, unmasked a carronade which they had had time to turn upon their enemy. A volley of fire and iron was vomited forth on the assailants. One fourth of the crew of the *Indienne* fell killed or mutilated on the enemy's deck, in the midst of cries and maledictions. But above the cries and blasphemous oaths, a voice resounded, crying:

"Forward – all of you!"

Then ensued a scene of appalling confusion – a combat hand to hand – a general duel. To the roar of cannon, to the report of musketry, to the explosion of hand grenades, had succeeded the struggle with cold steel, less noisy but more sure, above all with seamen, who have retained for their sole use this inheritance from the giants, proscribed for more than two centuries on the field of battle. It was with hatchets that they cleaved each other's skulls; it was with cutlasses they wounded each other's breasts; it was with boarding-pikes that they nailed each other to the deck and masts. From time to time, in the midst of this mute carnage, a stray pistol shot was heard, but isolated, and as if ashamed of taking part in such a butchery. It lasted nearly a quarter of an hour, and amidst a confusion it would be impossible to describe. And then the British flag was lowered, and the crew of the *Drake* being driven below, there remained on deck only the conquerors, the wounded and the dead; in the midst of whom was the captain of the *Indienne*, surrounded by his crew, with his foot upon the breast of the captain of the enemy's ship, having on his right his first lieutenant, Walter, and on his left his young prisoner, whose shirt, steeped in blood, witnessed the share he had in the victory.

"Now, all is over," said Paul, stretching out his hand; "and he who strikes another blow will have to deal with me."

Then holding out his hand to his young prisoner, "Sir," said he, "you will relate to me, to-night, how it was that you were made my prisoner, will you not! For there must be some cowardly machination in this affair. The infamous only are transported to Cayenne, and you are too brave to be infamous."

CHAPTER IV. – THE MARCHIONESS

She was a woman Of virtue most austere; noble in birth,
And of most royal presence – but sad thoughts
Seemed to possess her wholly – her children, even,
Seldom approached her, and when they did,
No soft affection, motherly caress,
Was e'er accorded to them – stern and cold,
She looked a moving statue. – Old Play.

About six months after the occurrence of the events we have just related, and in the early part of the spring of 1780, a post chaise, whose wheels and panels covered with mud and dust, clearly certified that it had performed a long journey, was dragging slowly along, although two powerful horses were harnessed to it, upon the road between Vanness and Auray. The traveller it contained, and who was roughly jolted in traversing the cross-roads, was our former acquaintance, Count Emanuel, whom we saw open the scene upon the jetty of Fort Louis. He was coming from Paris with all haste, and proceeding to his ancient family mansion, with regard to which it is now necessary to give some more precise and circumstantial details.

Count Emanuel d'Auray was descended from one of the oldest families in Brittany – one of his ancestors had followed Saint Louis to the Holy Land, and from that time the name, of which he was the last inheritor, had been constantly blended with the history of our monarchy, whether in its victories or defeats. His father, the Marquis of d'Auray, Chevalier of the order of St. Louis, Commander of the order of St. Michael, and Grand Cross of the order of the Holy Ghost, enjoyed at the Court of Louis XV., in which he filled the post of high steward, that high distinction to which his birth, his fortune and his personal merit, truly entitled him. His influence there had been increased by his marriage with Mademoiselle de Sable, who was his equal in every thing that regarded family or credit at court: so that a brilliant future was opened to the ambition of the young people, when, after being married five years, a report was suddenly spread about the court, that the Marquis d'Auray had become insane during a journey he had made to his estates. This report was for a long time disbelieved. At length the winter arrived, and neither the marquis nor his wife made their appearance at Versailles. His place was kept open for him another year, for the king, still hoping he would regain his reason, refused to appoint a successor to it; but a second winter passed on, and even the marchioness did not return to pay her court to the queen. In France people are soon forgotten; absence is a wearying malady, to which even the greatest names sooner or later must succumb. The shroud of indifference was gradually spread over this family, immured in their old chateau, as in a tomb, and whose voices were not heard either soliciting or complaining. Genealogists alone had duly enregistered the birth of a son and daughter, the only fruits of this union; the d'Aurays, therefore, continued to figure among the names of the French nobility; but not having mixed themselves up for more than twenty years either in court intrigues or in political affairs, not having sided either with a Pampadour or a Du Barry, not having distinguished themselves in the victories of the Maréchal de Broglie, or in the defeats of the Count Clermont – in short, having neither sound nor echo, they had been completely forgotten.

However, the ancient name of the lords of d'Auray had been twice pronounced at court, but without producing any impression. The first time on the occasion of the young Count Emanuel's being admitted in 1769, as one of the pages of Louis XV., and the second, when after having served his time as page, he entered the company of mousquetaires of the young King Louis XVI. He had, during this time, become acquainted with the Baron de Lectoure, a distant relation of M. de Maurepas, who was favorably disposed towards him, and who enjoyed a considerable degree of influence with

that minister. Emanuel had been presented to his old courtier, who having been informed that the Count d'Auray had a sister, one day let fall a few words upon the possibility of an union between the two families. Emanuel, young and full of ambition, wearied with struggling beneath the veil which had obscured his family name, saw in this marriage a means of regaining the position which his father had occupied at court under the late king, and had eagerly caught at the first overtures for this alliance. M. de Lectoure, on his side, under the pretext of uniting himself still closer by the bands of brotherhood, to his young friend, had urged his suit with an eagerness which was so much the more flattering to Emanuel, that the man who demanded the hand of his sister had never seen her. The Marchioness d'Auray had listened the more readily to this proposal, as it opened to her son the road to royal favor, and the marriage was agreed upon, if not between the two young people, at all events between the families. Emanuel, who preceded M. de Lectoure three or four days only, had hastened into the country to inform his mother that everything had been arranged according to her desire. As to Marguerite, the intended wife, they contented themselves with informing her of the resolution they had taken without thinking it necessary to ask her consent to it, in about the same way that a criminal is informed of the sentence which condemns him to the scaffold.

It was, therefore, thus cradling himself in the brilliant dreams of future exalted favor, and bouying himself up with the most elevated projects of ambition, that young Count Emanuel re-entered the gloomy castle of his family, whose feudal towers, black walls, and court yards, overgrown with grass, formed so striking a contrast with the golden hopes that agitated him. The castle was a league and a half distant from any other dwelling. The principal facade overlooked that part of the ocean, which being so constantly swept by storms, has obtained the name of "the Wild Sea." The other looked toward an immense park, which, being for twenty years abandoned and uncultivated, had become a complete forest. As to the apartments, they had remained constantly closed, with the exception of those inhabited by the family. The furniture, which had been renewed during the reign of Louis XIV., had, thanks to the care of a numerous household, retained a rich and aristocratic appearance, which the more modern part of it had begun to lose, and which, although more elegant, was less magnificent. It had been supplied from the workshops of Boule, the appointed upholsterer of the court.

It was into one of these rooms, with deep mouldings, sculptured chimney pieces, and ceiling painted in fresco, that the Count Emanuel was ushered on alighting from his carriage. He was in such haste to communicate to his mother the happy news of which he was the bearer, that without taking the time to change his dress, he threw his hat, his gloves, and travelling pistols on the table, and ordered an old servant to inform the marchioness of his arrival, and to ask her permission to present himself, saying that he would await it in that room; for such in this old family was the respect paid to parents, that the son, after an absence of five months, did not dare to present himself to his mother, without in the first place consulting her desires upon the subject. As to the Marquis d'Auray, his children could not remember having seen him more than two or three times, and then it was by stealth: for his insanity was of a nature, it was said, that certain objects irritated, and they had been always kept from him with the greatest precaution. The marchioness alone, a model of conjugal virtue, remained always with him, fulfilling towards the poor lunatic not only the duties of a wife, but also those of a servant. Consequently, her name was revered in the surrounding villages, as that of a saint, whose devotedness on earth has gained a place in heaven.

In a few moments the old servant returned, and announced that the marchioness d'Auray preferred coming down to him, and begged that the count would wait for her in the room in which he then was. Almost immediately afterward the door of the room again opened, and Emanuel's mother entered it. She was about forty or forty-five years of age, tall and pale, but still handsome, whose calm, austere and melancholy features had a singular appearance of haughtiness, energy, and command. She was in costume of a widow as adopted in 1760, for since the time that her husband had lost his reason, she had never laid aside her mourning garments. Her long black gown gave to her movements, cold and slow as those of a shadow, a solemn appearance, which shed around this extraordinary woman a

feeling of awe, which even filial affection had never been able to surmount. Therefore, on seeing her, Emanuel started as at the sight of an unexpected apparition, and instantly rising, he advanced three steps toward her, respectfully went down upon one knee, and kissed the hand she presented to him.

"Rise, sir," said the marchioness. "I am happy to see you again." And she pronounced these words with as little emotion as if her son, who had been absent five months, had left her but the day before. Emanuel obeyed, conducted his mother to a large arm chair, in which she seated herself, and he remained standing before her.

"I received your letter, count," she said, "and I congratulate you on your skill. You appear to me born for diplomacy, and even more so than for military life. You ought to request the Baron de Lectoure to obtain an embassy for you, rather than a regiment."

"Lectoure is ready to solicit any thing we may desire, madam; and what is more, he will obtain any thing we may solicit, so great is his power with M. Maurepas, and so great is his love for my sister."

"In love with a woman he has never seen?"

"Lectoure is a gentleman, madam, and the portrait I have drawn of Marguerite, and perhaps the information he has received as to our fortune, has inspired him with the most earnest desire to become your son and to call himself my brother. And therefore he has requested that all the preliminary ceremonies may be gone through in his absence. You have obtained the publication of the bans, madam?"

"Yes."

"The day after to-morrow, then, the marriage contract can be signed."

"With the help of God, all will be ready."

"Thanks, madam."

"But tell me," continued the marchioness, leaning on the arm of her chair, and bending toward Emanuel, "has he not questioned you regarding that young man, for whom he obtained from the minister an order of deportation?"

"By no means, my mother, these are services which are asked without entering into any explanation, and which are granted in implicit confidence. It is well understood between people who know the world, that they are to be forgotten as soon as rendered."

"Then he knows nothing?"

"No – but did he know all – "

"Well?"

"Well, madam, I believe he is so much of a philosopher, that the discovery would not in any way influence his determination."

"I thought as much; he is a ruined spendthrift," replied the marchioness, with an indescribable expression of contempt, and as if speaking to herself.

"But supposing it should be so," said Emanuel anxiously, "your resolution would be still unchanged, I hope."

"Are we not rich enough to repair his fortune if he can restore our former influence?"

"Then, there is only my sister – "

"Do you doubt that she will obey me, when I inform her of my will?"

"Can you believe, then, that she has forgotten Lusignan?"

"For seven months, at least, she has not dared to remember him in my presence."

"Reflect, my mother, that this marriage is the only means by which our family can be restored to influence; for there is one thing I must not conceal from you. My father has been ill for fifteen years, and having been absent from court so long, was completely forgotten by the old king at his death, and by the young king on his accession to the throne. Your virtuous attention to the marquis, has not permitted you to leave him, even for a moment, since the hour in which he was deprived of reason; your virtues, madam, are of that nature which God sees, and recompenses, but of which the world remains ignorant; and while you are fulfilling in this old forgotten castle in Brittany, the holy

and consolatory mission, which you call a duty, your former friends disappear, they die, or they forget you (this is a painful truth to people, who like us, can count six hundred years of illustrious nobility); for when I reappeared at court, our name, the name of the family d'Auray, was hardly known to their majesties, but as an historical recollection."

"Yes; I know full well that kings have but short memories," murmured the marchioness; but instantly, and as if reproaching herself for such a blasphemy, she rejoined, "I hope that the blessing of God may always attend their majesties and France."

"And what can in any way affect their happiness?" replied Emanuel, with that perfect confidence in the future, which in those days was the distinctive, characteristic of the hair-brained and unthinking nobility. "Louis XVI. is young and good; Marie Antoinette young and lovely; both of them beloved by a brave and loyal people. Fate has placed them, Heaven be praised, beyond the reach of every evil."

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