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"I meant to say that he would look at it twice. But we are discussing hypotheses and that it very useless. Believe me, my dear Paul, we ought to take a walk. The open air will freshen up your ideas."

The two went out, and, on the corner of the Rue de Rohan, halted on seeing Jean Tournesol coming up on the other footway; he walked with hanging head, stooping shoulders and swinging arms, like a man overwhelmed by a sudden blow.

"Some misfortune has befallen your man," remarked Prigny. "He is quite downcast."

"So it is, though I cannot guess what," muttered Paul. "I ought to follow him and learn where he is going so miserably."

"I hope not to the river to drown himself."

They crossed the street and hurried on to overtake Tournesol, who had not seen them; he was talking to himself.

"Oh, womee women?" he grumbled, "you are all alike! no better here than in Spain! they pile up their vows to you—you go away supported by them and—one, two! go! the wind shifts, and when you return you find your place taken by another! a soldier of a line regiment! a march-in-the-mud regiment! and all because he belongs to the Imperial Guard. Oh, Pelagie! Pelagie, oh!"

"Pelagie," repeated Fontenay, suppressing his laughter at this clew to the distress.

"Captain, is it you?" exclaimed Tournesol, stopping, and for once, in his surprise, forgetting to salute.

"What did you say about Pelagie! the grocery-woman, is it not? Has she gone over to the majority?"

"Not to the major, captain—only to a corporal—she is married to a grenadier corporal of the Old Guard! a grizzled-moustache! a licensed grumbler! I would not so much care if it had been a dragon-guard, for he would still be in the avairy! No, the widow must stoop to the foot, and the 13th Cuirassiers are jilted! it is humiliating!"

"What else did you expect, my hero? no good ever comes to the absentee!" said the auditor, doing his utmost to restrain his laughter.

As a lover himself, the creole sympathized with Tournesol in his grief.

"Just imagine, captain, that I went to the grocery in the Rue de Orties; I had brushed myself up, and looked spick and span, as you see! and at the cash-desk was a strapping old griffin in his shirt-sleeves and a fatigue-cap—where I always wore my helmet—and he asked me if I wanted any pickles? Pickles! I said I wanted the store-keeper, which he said he was! she—she was his wife!"

Here George exploded, and Fontenay could not but laugh a little.

"This so upset me that I stuttered out something like: 'Oh, tell her it is of no consequence!' and I sneaked out. He ran after me, thinking it a hoax, but he saw I was not afraid of him, and he returned to serve the customers."

"Perhaps it was her head-man and he was joking with you," said Fontenay charitably.

"No, it is really her husband. I inquired among the neighbors. He was wounded at Essling and shelved into reserve. He belongs to Paris and he captivated Pelagie on his return home. They have been six weeks married."

"Pooh!" said George merrily, "you will make a better match yet, my honest fellow."

"Oh, I am comforted already. I feel that the grocery business would not suit me. I will stay by my captain, and we will deal in hard knocks."

"Unless I leave the army," interrupted Fontenay.

"Why, captain, you would never do that!"

"I hope not, but if circumstances compel it, I trust I will not be parted from you. You have served ten years; you can obtain your discharge, and I will give you an occupation agreeable to your head groom over my horses."

"Good," exclaimed the Gascon, "you are going to marry the young lady who reads stories to the Empress. She has no sordid trade ideas!"

"I am happy to say, none!"

"So, captain, we are not going back into Spain? That suits me! I have had enough of the place. The wine is not bad, but there are altogether too many knives."

"Some can be met in Paris," retorted Fontenay lightly, as he pointed to the Rue Saint Nicaise.

"But the brigand is dead who gave you one out, and he was a Spaniard. All those villainous doings are over. Ah! it will be sweet not to have to ask first thing in the morning if my captain is going to be killed before night!"

This outburst sprang from the heart and clearly expressed the feelings of the brave and modest soldier who had always taken more care of his officer's life than his own. Fontenay thanked him in such kind words that when the faithful Gascon left the two friends, he no longer thought of the treacherous Pelagie.

Happiness cannot be described, and the month before Fontenay's wedding was a series of enchantments. The betrothed followed the Empress from La Malmaison to Saint Cloud, where their union was blessed in the Chateau chapel, in the beginning of October.

The Emperor was still in Vienna, and the ceremony lacked his presence—but Tournesol looked on in his uniform as a cuirassier, and the small boys at the palace gates cheered him quite as heartily.

The Emperor had not required pressure to send his consent to his staff-officer's marriage, and the cordiality of the act conducted to supporting Josephine's allusions; she still flattered herself that the divorce was not irrevocably resolved.

The wedding-day was the last of her happy ones.

In truth, all was finished in France as regarded her, and on the 16th of December, 1809, she quitted the Tuileries, into which she had entered on the 19th of February, 1800, amid the acclamation of the people of Paris and the first soldiers of the world.

She went to La Malmaison, reaching it at close of day. It poured in torrents and the ground was strewn with dead leaves. What a night for Fontenay and his young

wife, trying to soothe the Empress in her sorrow.

They were ever-faithful to her, and followed her to death. Courtiers of misfortune, they were at her bedside on the ultimate day, uniting their prayers with her children's when she yielded up her soul to heaven on Pentecost Sunday, May the 29th, 1814, at La Malmaison.

The Empire had collapsed; France succumbed under the number of all the peoples she had vanquished. The Allies occupied Paris.

Fontenay could dwell there no longer. He departed with Marguerite for America. He bought a house and land by the seaside in Martinique, near Trois-Hets, where he was born and the future Empress of the French passed her childhood.

Tournesol followed them, without regretting military service or his country where he had no kin or landed estate. Gascons accommodate themselves to all latitudes, and he soon became acclimated to the Antilles where his good humor and varied accomplishments made him the delight of the negroes, who are only "children of a larger growth."

This lovely colony prospered, then, though ruined since, and the colonists grew rich. Fontenay arrived with six hundred thousand francs with which the Empress had endowed his wife. Active and intelligent as he was, and "a native to the manner born," he soon tripled his capital by superintending his own plantations.

He never longed to revisit France, the 1814 and 1815 invasions weighing upon his heart. Napoleon had died at Saint Helena and his family were in exile. Fontenay remained faithful to the memory of the great Emperor whom he had served in Spain. Marguerite had nobody to love but her husband and her son, and it would have given her pain to see Paris again, full to her of memories of her benefactress Josephine. Nothing was missing for her gentle and affectionate soul! What should she seek in France? her life flowed on like a limpid brook under the ever-blue sky, at the foot of the evergreen hills, among the flowers—adored by all around her. Never having liked society or noisy pleasure-making, Marguerite de Fontenay soon became accustomed to creole manners and home happiness sufficed her.

Neither she nor her husband thought of claiming the real estate in Spain which legitimately belonged to her; they acted sensibly, as it would not have been restored to them. Ferdinand VII. had reascended his throne, and on his side of the Pyrenees, Count Blas de Montalvan, the martyr of the independence, was venerated like a saint. The ex-staff officer of Napoleon would have wasted his time in commencing a suit against the Spanish government which had seized the Tio's property since his tragic end, and meant to keep it.

George Prigny, going over to the Government of the Restoration and marrying a wealthy woman, lived long in years; he was wise and able.

Poor Carénac was a colonel when a cannon ball slew him at the foot of the grand redoubt in the battle of the Moskowa. Like him, Zolnycki finished, fighting the Russians during the Polish Rebellion of 1830, but he had become a general in the National Army, and he died for his native land as he had always yearned to do.

Tournesol peacefully laid down his life at Martinique, his master having died, comparatively young, in his own house, and the last of the Seguras having followed her beloved mate closely to eternal repose. In their colonial life, not an untoward event had disturbed their ways—far less an occasion to call out the skill and courage—dormant, not extinct—of Fontenay the Swordsman.

THE END.

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A Competent Witness.

In one of our courts recently a nine-year-old boy was placed on the witness stand, but before he began to testify, the defendants' counsel objected, and would not allow him to give his evidence, asking the court to pass on his intelligence and his idea of the responsibility of an oath.

"Question him on these points," was the judge's reply.

"How old are you?" began the lawyer.

"Nine years old."

"Work or go to school?"

"Do both—sell papers and flowers."

"Do you know what an oath is?"

"To tell the truth in this case, sure."

"Now, if you should not state the truth and tell a lie, what would become of you in the next world?"

The boy after hesitating awhile, answered:—

"I don't know what will become of me in this world, let alone the next."

"Proceed, Mr. Attorney," said the judge; "the boy seems to have more than ordinary intelligence."

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Daily Mail
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