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"Hev! I was passing in my carriage and I saw you standing on your head in the air. The young man let you up on conditions, as I understood." "He swore he would go from the

house," cried the young stranger. "Yet when I had let him up he set his men best." upon me, and we all came downstairs together."

"My faith, you seem to have left little behind you," said Conde, smiling, as he glanced at the litter which was strewn all over the floor. "And so you

broke your parole, Captain Dalbert?"

the dragoon sulkily.

him go, sir?" "I believed his promise. I have been used to deal with Indians." "Heh! And you think an Indian's

word is better than that of an officer in the king's dragoons?" "I did not think so an hour ago." "You are very strong, monsieur," said

Conde, glancing keenly at the broad shoulders and arching chest of the young stranger. "You are from Canada, I presume?" "I have been there, sir. But I am

from New York." "And how came you to speak French?"

"My mother was of French blood." "And how long have you been in Paris?"

"A day." "Heh! And you already begin to throw your mother's country folk out

of windows!" "He was annoying a young maid, sir, and I asked him to stop, whereon he whipped out his sword and would have slain me had I not closed with him, upon which he called upon his fellows to aid him. To keep them off I swore that I would drop him over if they moved a step. Yet when I let him go they set upon me again."

"Hem! You did very well. You are young, but you have resource."

"I was reared in the woods, sir." "If there are many of your kidney you may give my friend De Frontenac some work ere he found this empire of which he talks. But how is this, Captain Dalbert? What have you to say?"

"The king's orders, your highness, are to use every means which may drive these people into the true church."

"On my word, you look a very fine apostle and a pretty champion for a holy cause," said Conde, glancing sardonically out of his twinkling black eyes at the brutal face of the dragoon. "Take your men-out of this, sir, and never venture to set foot again across this threshold."

"But the king's command, your high-

"I will tell the king when I see him that I left soldiers and that I find brigands. Not a word, sir! Away! You take your shame with you, and you leave your honor behind." He had turned in an instant from the sneering, strutting old beau to the fierce soldier with set face and eye of fire. Dalbert shrank back from his baleful gaze, and, muttering an order to his men, they filed off down the stair with clattering feet and clank of

"Your highness," said the old Huguenot, coming forward and throwing open one of the doors which led from the landing, "you have indeed been a savior of Israel and a stumbling block to the froward this day. Will you not deign to rest under my roof and even to take a cup of wine ere you go on-

Conde raised his thick eyebrows at the Scriptural fashion of the merchant's speech, but he bowed courte-

ously to the invitation. "My carriage waits below," said he, "and I must not delay longer. It is not often that I leave my castle of Chantilly to come to Paris, and it was a fortunate chance which made me pass in time to be of service to honest men." He inclined again his bewigged head and strutted off in his dainty, dandified fashion. From the window De Catinat could see him step into the same gilded chariot which had stood

in his way as he drove from Versailles. "By my faith," said he, turning to the young American, "we all owe thanks to the prince, but it seems to me, sir, that we are your debtors even more. You have risked your life for my cousin, and but for your cudgel Dalbert would have had his blade through me when he had me at a vantage. Your hand, sir! These are

things which a man cannot forget." "Aye, you may well thank him, Amory," broke in the old Huguenot, who had returned after escorting his illustrious guest to the carriage. "He has been raised up as a champion for the afflicted and as a helper for those who are in need."

But their young visitor appeared to be more embarrassed by their thanks than by any of his preceding adventures. The blood flushed to his weather tanned, clear cut face, as smooth as that of a boy and yet marked by firmness of lip and shrewdness in the keen

blue eyes. "I have a mother and two sisters from America and would fain see all over the water," said he diffidently. "And you honor women for their

"We always honor women over there. Perhaps it is that we have so few. Over in these old countries you have not learned what it is to be without them. I have felt what a good woman is and how, like the sunshine, she draws out

"Indeed, the ladies should be very much obliged to monsieur, who is as eloquent as he is brave," said Adele Catinat, who, standing in the open door, had listened to the latter part of his remarks.

of one's soul all that is purest and

"Much of my life has been spent in "I could not hold treaty with a Hu- the woods," said he, "and one speaks guenot and an enemy of the king," said so little there that one comes to forget how to do it. It was for this that my "You could hold treaty, it appears, father wished me to stay some time in but not keep it. And why did you let France, for he would not have me grow up a mere trapper and trader." "And how long do you stop in Paris?" asked the guardsman.

> "Until Ephraim Savage, the master of the Golden Rod, my father's ship, comes for me. She has been to Bristol, is now at Rouen and then must go to Bristol again. When she comes back once more Ephraim comes to Paris for me, and it will be time for me to go." "And how like you Paris? Have you

seen the city yet?" "Only as I journeyed through it yester evening on my way to this house. It is a wondrous place, but I marvel how you can find your way among these thousands of houses."

"Perchance it would be as well that you should have a guide at first," said De Catinat, "so if you have two horses ready in your stables, uncle, our friend and I might shortly ride back to Versailles together, for I have a spell of guard again before many hours are over. Then for some days he might bide with me there, if he will share a soldier's quarters, and so see more than the Rue St. Martin can offer."

"I should be right glad to come out with you, if we may leave all here in safety," said Amos.

"Oh, fear not for that," said the Huguenot. "The order of the Prince of Conde will be as a shield and a buckler to us for many a day. I will order Pierre to saddle the horses."

After riding some time De Catinat said, "Now, if you will look there in the gap of the trees, you will see the king's new palace of Versailles."

The two young men pulled up their horses and looked down at the wide spreading building in all the beauty of its dazzling whiteness and at the lovely grounds, dotted with fountain and with statue and barred with hedge and with walk stretching away to the dense woods which clustered round them.

They passed through the gateway of the palace, and the broad sweeping drive lay in front of them, dotted with carriages and horsemen. On the gravel



"I am so pleased to see you, captain." that you had gone to Paris, and so stationed myself here. Madame has something which she would ask you." "Then I will come at once. Ah, De

Brissac, it is well met!" A tall, burly officer was passing in the same uniform which De Catinat wore. He turned at once and came

smiling toward his comrade. "Ah, Amory, you have covered a league or two from the dust on your

"We are fresh from Paris. But I am called on business. This is my friend, M. Amos Green. I leave him in your hands, for he is a stranger that you can show. He stays with me at my quarters. And my horse, too,

groom." Throwing the bridle to his brother officer and pressing the hand of Amos Green, De Catinat sprang from his horse and followed at the top of his speed in the direction which the young lady had already taken.

CHAPTER VI.

HE rooms which were inhabited by the lady who had already taken so marked a position at the court of France were as humble as were her fortunes at the time when they were allotted to her, but with that rare tact and self restraint which were the leading features in her remarkable character she had made no change in her living with the increase of her prosperity and forbore from provoking envy and jealousy by any display of wealth or of power. In a side wing of the palace, far from the central salons and only to be reached by long corridors and stairs, were the two or three small chambers upon which the eyes, first of the court, then of France and finally of the world, were destined to be turned. In such rooms had the destitute widow of the poet Scarron been housed when she had first been brought to court by Mme. de Montespan as the governess of the royal children, and in such rooms she still dwelt now that she had added to her maiden Francoise d'Aubigny the title of Marquise de Maintenon, with the pension his own desk. Trial lessons for one and estate which the king's favor had awarded her.

The young guardsman had scarce ever exchanged a word with this powerful lady, for it was her taste to isolate herself and to appear with the court only at the hours of devotion. It was therefore with some feelings both of nervousness and of curiosity that he followed his guide down the gorgeous corridors, where art and wealth had been strewn with so lavish a hand. The lady paused in front of the chamber door and turned to her companion.

"Madame wishes to speak to you of what occurred this morning," said she. "I should advise you to say nothing to madame about your creed, for it is the only thing upon which her heart can be hard." She raised her finger to emphasize the warning, and, tapping at the door, she pushed it open. "I have brought Captain de Catinat, madame,"

"Then let the captain step in." The voice was firm and yet sweetly mu-

Obeying the command, De Catinat found himself in a room which was no larger and but little better furnished than that which was allotted to his own use. Yet, though simple, everything in the chamber was scrupulously neat and clean, betraying the dainty taste of a refined woman. The stamped leather furniture, the La Savonniere carpet, the pictures of sacred subjects, exquisite from an artist's point of view, the plain but tasteful curtains, all left an impression half religious and half feminine, but wholly soothing. Indeed, the soft light, the high white statue of the Virgin in a canopied niche, with a perfumed red lamp burning before it, and the wooden prie-dieu with the red edged prayer book upon the top of it made the apartment look more

On each side of the empty fireplace was a little green covered armchair, the one for madame and the other rewalks were many gayly dressed ladies, served for the use of the king. A small who strolled among the flower beds or three legged stool between them was watched the fountains with the sun- heaped with her workbasket and her light glinting upon their high water tapestry. On the chair which was farsprays. One of these, who had kept thest from the door, with her back feeling, drowsiness, bad taste in the her eyes turned upon the gate, came turned to the light, madame was sithastening forward the instant that De ting as the young officer entered. De Catinat appeared. It was Mlle. Nanon, Catinat, without having time to notice the confidante of Mme. de Maintenon. | details, was simply conscious that he "I am so pleased to see you, cap- was in the presence of a very handtain," she cried, "and I have waited so some woman and that her large, penpatiently. Madame would speak with sive eyes were fixed critically upon you. The king comes to her at 3, and him and seemed to be reading his we have but twenty minutes. I heard thoughts as they had never been read before.

"I think that I have already seen you, sir. Have I not?"

had the honor of attending upon you, though it may not have been my good fortune to address you."

"My life is so quiet and retired that I fear that much of what is best and worthiest at the court is unknown to me. You have served, monsieur?" "Yes, madame. In the Lowlands,

on the Rhine and in Canada." "In Canada! Ah! What nobler ambition could woman have than to be a member of that sweet sisterhood which was founded by the holy Marie de l'Incarnation and the sainted Jeanne le Ber at Montreal? And doubtless you have had the privilege also of seeing the holy Bishop Laval?" "Yes, madame, I have seen Bishop

"And I trust that the Sulpicians still hold their own against the Jesuits?" "I have heard, madame, that the Jesuits are the stronger at Quebec and he others at Montreal."

"And who is your own director, mon-De Catinat felt that the worst had come upon him. "I have none, ma-

"Ah, it is too common to dispense now I could guide my steps in the difnot for mine. Who is your confessor,

then?" "I have none. I am of the Reformed

and a sudden hardening showed itself in mouth and eye. "What, in the court itself," she cried, "and in the neighborhood of the king's own person!"

"You will find, madame," said De Catinat sternly, "that members of my faith have not only stood around the throne of France, but have even seated themselves upon it."

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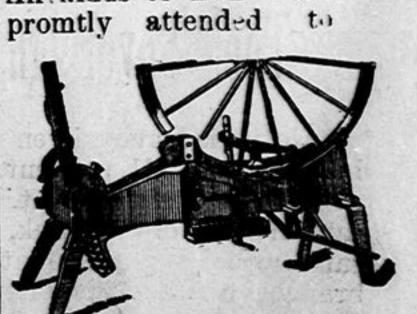
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