

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Vinci
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Gogol Busch
Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato Scott
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Dickens Plato Scott
Andersen London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Bunner Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Doré Dante Pushkin Alcott
Swift Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Newton



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**The Battle of the Strong –
Volume 4 A Romance of Two
Kingdoms**

Gilbert Parker

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CHAPTER XXIII

With what seemed an unnecessary boldness Detricand slept that night at the inn, "The Golden Crown," in the town of Bercy: a Royalist of the Vendee exposing himself to deadly peril in a town sworn to alliance with the Revolutionary Government. He knew that the town, even the inn, might be full of spies; but one other thing he also knew: the innkeeper of "The Golden Crown" would not betray him, unless he had greatly changed since fifteen years ago. Then they had been friends, for his uncle of Vaufontaine had had a small estate in Bercy itself, in ironical proximity to the castle.

He walked boldly into the inn parlour. There were but four men in the room—the landlord, two stout burghers, and Frange Pergot, the porter of the castle, who had lost no time carrying his news: not to betray his old comrade in escapade, but to tell a chosen few, Royalists under the rose, that he had seen one of those servants of God, an officer of the Vendee.

At sight of the white badge with the red cross on Detricand's coat, the four stood up and answered his greeting with devout respect; and he had speedy assurance that in this inn he was safe from betrayal. Presently he learned that three days hence a meeting of the States of Bercy was to be held for setting the seal upon the Duke's formal adoption of Philip, and to execute a deed of succession. It was deemed certain that, ere this, the officer sent to England would have returned with Philip's freedom and King George's licence to accept the succession in the duchy. From interest in these matters alone Detricand would not have remained at Bercy, but he thought to use the time for secretly meeting officers of the duchy likely to favour the cause of the Royalists.

During these three days of waiting he heard with grave concern a rumour that the great meeting of the States would be marked by Philip's betrothal with the Comtesse Chantavoine. He cared naught for the succession, but there was ever with him the remembrance of Guida Landresse de Landresse, and what touched Philip d'Avranche he had come to associate with her. Of the true relations

between Guida and Philip he knew nothing, but from that last day in Jersey he did know that Philip had roused in her emotions, perhaps less vital than love but certainly less equable than friendship.

Now in his fear that Guida might suffer, the more he thought of the Comtesse Chantavoine as the chosen wife of Philip the more it troubled him. He could not shake off oppressive thoughts concerning Guida and this betrothal. They interwove themselves through all his secret business with the Royalists of Bercy. For his own part, he would have gone far and done much to shield her from injury. He had seen and known in her something higher than Philip might understand—a simple womanliness, a profound depth of character. His pledge to her had been the key-note of his new life. Some day, if he lived and his cause prospered, he would go back to Jersey—too late perhaps to tell her what was in his heart, but not too late to tell her the promise had been kept.

It was a relief when the morning of the third day came, bright and joyous, and he knew that before the sun went down he should be on his way back to Saumur.

His friend the innkeeper urged him not to attend the meeting of the States of Bercy, lest he should be recognised by spies of government.

He was, however, firm in his will to go, but he exchanged his coat with the red cross for one less conspicuous.

With this eventful morn came the news that the envoy to England had returned with Philip's freedom by exchange of prisoners, and with the needful licence from King George. But other news too was carrying through the town: the French Government, having learned of the Duke's intentions towards Philip, had despatched envoys from Paris to forbid the adoption and deed of succession.

Though the Duke would have defied them, it behoved him to end the matter, if possible, before these envoys' arrival. The States therefore was hurriedly convened two hours before the time appointed, and the race began between the Duke and the emissaries of the French Government.

It was a perfect day, and as the brilliant procession wound down the great rock from the castle, in ever-increasing, glittering line, the effect was mediaeval in its glowing splendour. All had been ready for two days, and the general enthusiasm had seized upon the occasion with an adventurous picturesqueness, in keeping with this strange elevation of a simple British captain to royal estate. This buoyant, clear-faced, stalwart figure had sprung suddenly out of the dark into the garish light of sovereign place, and the imagination of the people had been touched. He was so genial too, so easy-mannered, this d'Avranche of Jersey, whose genealogy had been posted on a hundred walls and carried by a thousand mouths through the principality. As Philip rode past on the left of the exulting Duke, the crowds cheered him wildly. Only on the faces of Comte Carignan Damour and his friends was discontent, and they must perforce be still. Philip himself was outwardly calm, with that desperate quiet which belongs to the most perilous, most adventurous achieving. Words he had used many years ago in Jersey kept ringing in his ears—"Good-bye, Sir Philip"—I'll be more than that some day."

The Assembly being opened, in a breathless silence the Governor-General of the duchy read aloud the licence of the King of England for Philip d'Avranche, an officer in his navy, to assume the honours to be conferred upon him by the Duke and the States of Bercy. Then, by command of the Duke, the President of the States read aloud the new order of succession:

"1. To the Hereditary Prince Leopold John and his heirs male; in default of which to

"2. The Prince successor, Philip d'Avranche and his heirs male; in default of which to

"3. The heir male of the House of Vaufontaine." Afterwards came reading of the deed of gift by which the Duke made over to Prince Philip certain possessions in the province of d'Avranche. To all this the assent of Prince Leopold John had been formally secured. After the Assembly and the chief officers of the duchy should have ratified these documents and the Duke signed them, they were to be enclosed in a box with three locks and deposited with the Sovereign Court at Bercy. Duplicates were also to be sent to London and regis-

tered in the records of the College of Arms. Amid great enthusiasm, the States, by unanimous vote, at once ratified the documents. The one notable dissentient was the Intendant, Count Carignan Damour, the devout ally of the French Government. It was he who had sent Fouche word concerning Philip's adoption; it was also he who had at last, through his spies, discovered Detricand's presence in the town, and had taken action thereupon. In the States, however, he had no vote, and wisdom kept him silent, though he was watchful for any chance to delay events against the arrival of the French envoys.

They should soon be here, and, during the proceedings in the States, he watched the doors anxiously. Every minute that passed made him more restless, less hopeful. He had a double motive in preventing this new succession. With Philip as adopted son and heir there would be fewer spoils of office; with Philip as duke there would be none at all, for the instinct of distrust and antipathy was mutual. Besides, as a Republican, he looked for his reward from Fouche in good time.

Presently it was announced by the President that the signatures to the acts of the States would be set in private. Thereupon, with all the concourse standing, the Duke, surrounded by the law, military, and civil officers of the duchy, girded upon Philip the jewelled sword which had been handed down in the House of d'Avranche from generation to generation. The open function being thus ended, the people were enjoined to proceed at once to the cathedral, where a *Te Deum* would be sung.

The public then retired, leaving the Duke and a few of the highest officials of the duchy to formally sign and seal the deeds. When the outer doors were closed, one unofficial person remained—Comte Detricand de Tournay, of the House of Vaufontaine. Leaning against a pillar, he stood looking calmly at the group surrounding the Duke at the great council-table.

Suddenly the Duke turned to a door at the right of the President's chair, and, opening it, bowed courteously to some one beyond. An instant afterwards there entered the Comtesse Chantavoine, with her uncle the Marquis Grandjon-Larisse, an aged and feeble but distinguished figure. They advanced towards the table, the lady on

the Duke's arm, and Philip, saluting them gravely, offered the Marquis a chair. At first the Marquis declined it, but the Duke pressed him, and in the subsequent proceedings he of all the number was seated.

Detricand apprehended the meaning of the scene. This was the lady whom the Duke had chosen as wife for the new Prince. The Duke had invited the Comtesse to witness the final act which was to make Philip d'Avranche his heir in legal fact as by verbal proclamation; not doubting that the romantic nature of the incident would impress her. He had even hoped that the function might be followed by a formal betrothal in the presence of the officials; and the situation might still have been critical for Philip had it not been for the pronounced reserve of the Comtesse herself.

Tall, of gracious and stately carriage, the curious quietness of the face of the Comtesse would have been almost an unbecoming gravity were it not that the eyes, clear, dark, and strong, lightened it. The mouth had a somewhat set sweetness, even as the face was somewhat fixed in its calm. In her bearing, in all her motions, there was a regal quality; yet, too, something of isolation, of withdrawal, in her self-possession and unruffled observation. She seemed, to Detricand, a figure apart, a woman whose friendship would be everlasting, but whose love would be more an affectionate habit than a passion; and in whom devotion would be strong because devotion was the key-note of her nature. The dress of a nun would have turned her into a saint; of a peasant would have made her a Madonna; of a Quaker, would have made her a dreamer and a devotee; of a queen, would have made her benign yet unapproachable. It struck him all at once as he looked, that this woman had one quality in absolute kinship with Guida Landresse—honesty of mind and nature; only with this young aristocrat the honesty would be without passion. She had straight-forwardness, a firm if limited intellect, a clear-mindedness belonging somewhat to narrowness of outlook, but a genuine capacity for understanding the right and the wrong of things. Guida, so Detricand thought, might break her heart and live on; this woman would break her heart and die: the one would grow larger through suffering, the other shrink to a numb coldness.

So he entertained himself by these flashes of discernment, presently merged in wonderment as to what was in Philip's mind as he stood there, destiny hanging in that drop of ink at the point of the pen in the Duke's fingers!

Philip was thinking of the destiny, but more than all else just now he was thinking of the woman before him and the issue to be faced by him regarding her. His thoughts were not so clear nor so discerning as Detricand's. No more than he understood Guida did he understand this clear-eyed, still, self-possessed woman. He thought her cold, unsympathetic, barren of that glow which should set the pulses of a man like himself bounding. It never occurred to him that these still waters ran deep, that to awaken this seemingly glacial nature, to kindle a fire on this altar, would be to secure unto his life's end a steady, enduring flame of devotion. He revolted from her; not alone because he had a wife, but because the Comtesse chilled him, because with her, in any case, he should never be able to play the passionate lover as he had done with Guida; and with Philip not to be the passionate lover was to be no lover at all. One thing only appealed to him: she was the Comtesse Chantavoine, a fitting consort in the eyes of the world for a sovereign duke. He was more than a little carried off his feet by the marvel of the situation. He could think of nothing quite clearly; everything was confused and shifting in his mind.

The first words of the Duke were merely an informal greeting to his council and the high officers present. He was about to speak further when some one drew his attention to Detricand's presence. An order was given to challenge the stranger, but Detricand, without waiting for the approach of the officer, advanced towards the table, and, addressing the Duke, said:

"The Duc de Bercy will not forbid the presence of his cousin, Detricand de Tournay, at this impressive ceremony?"

The Duke, dumfounded, though he preserved an outward calm, could not answer for an instant. Then with a triumphant, vindictive smile which puckered his yellow cheeks like a wild apple, he said:

"The Comte de Tournay is welcome to behold an end of the ambitions of the Vaufontaines." He looked towards Philip with an exulting pride. "Monsieur le Comte is quite right," he added, turning to

his council — "he may always claim the privileges of a relative of the Bercys; but the hospitality goes not beyond my house and my presence, and monsieur le comte will understand my meaning."

At that moment Detricand caught the eye of Damour the Intendant, and he understood perfectly. This man, the innkeeper had told him, was known to be a Revolutionary, and he felt he was in imminent danger.

He came nearer, however, bowing to all present, and, making no reply to the Duke save a simple, "I thank your Highness," took a place near the council-table.

The short ceremony of signing the deeds immediately followed. A few formal questions were asked of Philip, to which he briefly replied, and afterwards he made the oath of allegiance to the Duke, with his hand upon the ancient sword of the d'Avranches. These preliminaries ended, the Duke was just stooping to put his pen to the paper for signature, when the Intendant, as much to annoy Philip as still to stay the proceedings against the coming of Fouche's men, said:

"It would appear that one question has been omitted in the formalities of this Court." He paused dramatically. He was only aiming a random shot; he would make the most of it.

The Duke looked up perturbed, and said sharply: "What is that — what is that, monsieur?"

"A form, monsieur le duc, a mere form. Monsieur" — he bowed towards Philip politely — "monsieur is not already married? There is no —" He paused again.

For an instant there was absolute stillness. Philip had felt his heart give one great thump of terror: Did the Intendant know anything? Did Detricand know anything.

Standing rigid for a moment, his pen poised, the Duke looked sharply at the Intendant and then still more sharply at Philip. The progress of that look had granted Philip an instant's time to recover his composure. He was conscious that the Comtesse Chantavoine had given a little start, and then had become quite still and calm. Now her eyes were intently fixed upon him.

He had, however, been too often in physical danger to lose his nerve at this moment. The instant was big with peril; it was the turning point of his life, and he felt it. His eyes dropped towards the spot of ink at the point of the pen the Duke held. It fascinated him, it was destiny.

He took a step nearer to the table, and, drawing himself up, looked his princely interlocutor steadily in the eyes.

"Of course there is no marriage—no woman?" asked the Duke a little hoarsely, his eyes fastened on Philip's. With steady voice Philip replied: "Of course, monsieur le duc."

There was another stillness. Some one sighed heavily. It was the Comtesse Chantavoine.

The next instant the Duke stooped, and wrote his signature three times hurriedly upon the deeds.

A moment afterwards, Detricand was in the street, making towards "The Golden Crown." As he hurried on he heard the galloping of horses ahead of him. Suddenly some one plucked him by the arm from a doorway.

"Quick—within!" said a voice. It was that of the Duke's porter, Frange Pergot. Without hesitation or a word, Detricand did as he was bid, and the door clanged to behind him.

"Fouche's men are coming down the street; spies have betrayed you," whispered Pergot. "Follow me. I will hide you till night, and then you must away."

Pergot had spoken the truth. But Detricand was safely hidden, and Fouche's men came too late to capture the Vendean chief or to forbid those formal acts which made Philip d'Avranche a prince.

Once again at Saumur, a week later, Detricand wrote a long letter to Carterette Mattingley, in Jersey, in which he set forth these strange events at Bercy, and asked certain questions concerning Guida.

CHAPTER XXIV

Since the day of his secret marriage with Guida, Philip had been carried along in the gale of naval preparation and incidents of war as a leaf is borne onward by a storm—no looking back, to-morrow always the goal. But as a wounded traveller nursing carefully his hurt seeks shelter from the scorching sun and the dank air, and travels by little stages lest he never come at all to friendly hostel, so Guida made her way slowly through the months of winter and of spring.

In the past, it had been February to Guida because the yellow Lenten lilies grew on all the sheltered cotils; March because the periwinkle and the lords-and-ladies came; May when the cliffs were a blaze of golden gorse and the perfume thereof made all the land sweet as a honeycomb.

Then came the other months, with hawthorn trees and hedges all in blow; the honeysuckle gladdening the doorways, the lilac in bloomy thickets; the ox-eyed daisy of Whitsuntide; the yellow rose of St. Brelade that lies down in the sand and stands up in the hedges; the "mergots" which, like good soldiers, are first in the field and last out of it; the unscented dog-violets, orchises and celandines; the osier beds, the ivy on every barn; the purple thrift in masses on the cliff; the sea-thistle in its glaucous green—"the laughter of the fields whose laugh was gold." And all was summer.

Came a time thereafter, when the children of the poor gathered blackberries for preserves and home made wine; when the wild stock flowered in St. Ouen's Bay; when the bracken fern was gathered from every cotil, and dried for apple-storing, for bedding for the cherished cow, for back-rests for the veilles, and seats round the winter fire; when peaches, apricots, and nectarines made the walls sumptuous red and gold; when the wild plum and crab-apple flourished in secluded roadways, and the tamarisk dropped its brown pods upon the earth. And all this was autumn.

At last, when the birds of passage swept aloft, snipe and teal and barnacle geese, and the rains began; when the green lizard with its turquoise-blue throat vanished; when the Jersey crapaud was heard croaking no longer in the valleys and the ponds; and the cows were well blanketed — then winter had come again.

Such was the association of seasons in Guida's mind until one day of a certain year, when for a few hours a man had called her his wife, and then had sailed away. There was no log that might thereafter record the days and weeks unwinding the coils of an endless chain into that sea whither Philip had gone.

Letters she had had, two letters, one in January, one in March. How many times, when a Channel-packet came in, did she go to the doorway and watch for old Mere Rossignol, making the rounds with her han basket, chanting the names of those for whom she had letters; and how many times did she go back to the kitchen, choking down a sob!

The first letter from Philip was at once a blessing and a blow; it was a reassurance and it was a misery. It spoke of bread, as it were, yet offered a stone. It eloquently, passionately told of his love; but it also told, with a torturing ease, that the Araminta was commissioned with sealed orders, and he did not know when he should see her nor when he should be able to write again. War had been declared against France, and they might not touch a port nor have chance to send a letter by a homeward vessel for weeks, and maybe months. This was painful, of course, but it was fate, it was his profession, and it could not be helped. Of course — she must understand — he would write constantly, telling her, as through a kind of diary, what he was doing every day, and then when the chance came the big budget should go to her.

A pain came to Guida's heart as she read the flowing tale of his buoyant love. Had she been the man and he the woman, she could never have written so smoothly of "fate," and "profession," nor told of this separation with so complaisant a sorrow. With her the words would have been wrenched forth from her heart, scarred into the paper with the bitterness of a spirit tried beyond enduring.

With what enthusiasm did Philip, immediately after his heart-breaking news, write of what the war might do for him; what ave-

nues of advancement it might open up, what splendid chances it would offer for success in his career! Did he mean that to comfort her, she asked herself. Did he mean it to divert her from the pain of the separation, to give her something to hope for? She read the letter over and over again—yet no, she could not, though her heart was so willing, find that meaning in it. It was all Philip, Philip full of hope, purpose, prowess, ambition. Did he think—did he think that that could ease the pain, could lighten the dark day settling down on her? Could he imagine that anything might compensate for his absence in the coming months, in this year of all years in her life? His lengthened absence might be inevitable, it might be fate, but could he not see the bitter cruelty of it? He had said that he would be back with her again in two months; and now—ah, did he not know!

As the weeks came and went again she felt that indeed he did not know— or care, maybe.

Some natures cling to beliefs long after conviction has been shattered. These are they of the limited imagination, the loyal, the pertinacious, and the affectionate, the single-hearted children of habit; blind where they do not wish to see, stubborn where their inclinations lie, unamenable to reason, wholly held by legitimate obligations.

But Guida was not of these. Her brain and imagination were as strong as her affections. Her incurable honesty was the deepest thing in her; she did not know even how to deceive herself. As her experience deepened under the influence of a sorrow which still was joy, and a joy that still was sorrow, her vision became acute and piercing. Her mind was like some kaleidoscope. Pictures of things, little and big, which had happened to her in her life, flashed by her inner vision in furious procession. It was as if, in the photographic machinery of the brain, some shutter had slipped from its place, and a hundred orderless and ungoverned pictures, loosed from natural restraint, rushed by.

Five months had gone since Philip had left her: two months since she had received his second letter, months of complexity of feeling; of tremulousness of discovery; of hungry eagerness for news of the war; of sudden little outbursts of temper in her household life—a new thing in her experience; of passionate touches of tenderness

towards her grandfather; of occasional biting comments in the conversations between the *Sieur* and the *Chevalier*, causing both gentlemen to look at each other in silent amaze; of as marked lapses into listless disregard of any talk going on around her.

She had been used often to sit still, doing nothing, in a sort of physical content, as the *Sieur* and his visitors talked; now her hands were always busy, knitting, sewing, or spinning, the steady gaze upon the work showing that her thoughts were far away. Though the *Chevalier* and her grandfather vaguely noted these changes, they as vaguely set them down to her growing womanhood. In any case, they held it was not for them to comment upon a woman or upon a woman's ways. And a girl like Guida was an incomprehensible being, with an orbit and a system all her own; whose sayings and doings were as little to be reduced to their understandings as the vagaries of any star in the Milky Way or the currents in St. Michael's Basin.

One evening she sat before the fire thinking of Philip. Her grandfather had retired earlier than usual. Biribi lay asleep on the *veille*. There was no sound save the ticking of the clock on the mantel above her head, the dog's slow breathing, the snapping of the log on the fire, and a soft rush of heat up the chimney. The words of Philip's letters, from which she had extracted every atom of tenderness they held, were always in her ears. At last one phrase kept repeating itself to her like some plaintive refrain, torturing in its mournful suggestion. It was this: "But you see, beloved, though I am absent from you I shall have such splendid chances to get on. There's no limit to what this war may do for me."

Suddenly Guida realised how different was her love from Philip's, how different her place in his life from his place in her life. She reasoned with herself, because she knew that a man's life was work in the world, and that work and ambition were in his bones and in his blood, had been carried down to him through centuries of industrious, ambitious generations of men: that men were one race and women were another. A man was bound by the conditions governing the profession by which he earned his bread and butter and played his part in the world, while striving to reach the seats of honour in high places. He must either live by the law, fulfil to the

letter his daily duties in the business of life, or drop out of the race; while a woman, in the presence of man's immoderate ambition, with bitterness and tears, must learn to pray, "O Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law."

Suddenly the whole thing resolved itself in Guida's mind, and her thinking came to a full stop. She understood now what was the right and what the wrong; and, child as she was in years, woman in thought and experience, yielding to the impulse of the moment, she buried her face in her hands and burst into tears.

"O Philip, Philip, Philip," she sobbed aloud, "it was not right of you to marry me; it was wicked of you to leave me!" Then in her mind she carried on the impeachment and reproach. If he had married her openly and left her at once, it would have been hard to bear, but in the circumstances it might have been right. If he had married her secretly and left her at the altar, so keeping the vow he had made her when she promised to become his wife, that might have been pardonable. But to marry her as he did, and then, breaking his solemn pledge, leave her—it was not right in her eyes; and if not right in the eyes of her who loved him, in whose would it be right?

To these definitions she had come at last.

It is an eventful moment, a crucial ordeal for a woman, when she forces herself to see the naked truth concerning the man she has loved, yet the man who has wronged her. She is born anew in that moment: it may be to love on, to blind herself, and condone and defend, so lowering her own moral tone; or to congeal in heart, become keener in intellect, scornful and bitter with her own sex and merciless towards the other, indifferent to blame and careless of praise, intolerant, judging all the world by her own experience, incredulous of any true thing. Or again she may become stronger, sadder, wiser; condoning nothing, minimising nothing, deceiving herself in nothing, and still never forgiving at least one thing—the destruction of an innocent faith and a noble credulity; seeing clearly the whole wrong; with a strong intelligence measuring perfectly the iniquity; but out of a largeness of nature and by virtue of a high sense of duty, devoting her days to the salvation of a man's honour, to the betterment of one weak or wicked nature.

Of these last would have been Guida.

"O Philip, Philip, you have been wicked to me!" she sobbed.

Her tears fell upon the stone hearth, and the fire dried them. Every teardrop was one girlish feeling and emotion gone, one bright fancy, one tender hope vanished. She was no longer a girl. There were troubles and dangers ahead of her, but she must now face them dry-eyed and alone.

In his second letter Philip had told her to announce the marriage, and said that he would write to her grandfather explaining all, and also to the Rev. Lorenzo Dow. She had waited and watched for that letter to her grandfather, but it had not come. As for Mr. Dow, he was a prisoner with the French; and he had never given her the marriage certificate.

There was yet another factor in the affair. While the island was agog over Mr. Dow's misfortune, there had been a bold robbery at St. Michael's Rectory of the strong-box containing the communion plate, the parish taxes for the year, and — what was of great moment to at least one person — the parish register of deaths, baptisms, and marriages. Thus it was that now no human being in Jersey could vouch that Guida had been married.

Yet these things troubled her little. How easily could Philip set all right! If he would but come back — that at first was her only thought; for what matter a ring, or any proof or proclamation without Philip!

It did not occur to her at first that all these things were needed to save her from shame in the eyes of the world. If she had thought of them apprehensively, she would have said to herself, how easy to set all right by simply announcing the marriage! And indeed she would have done so when war was declared and Philip received his new command, but that she had wished the announcement to come from him. Well, that would come in any case when his letter to her grandfather arrived. No doubt it had missed the packet by which hers came, she thought.

But another packet and yet another arrived; and still there was no letter from Philip for the Sieur de Mauprat. Winter had come, and spring had gone, and now summer was at hand. Haymaking was beginning, the wild strawberries were reddening among the clover,

and in her garden, apples had followed the buds on the trees beneath which Philip had told his fateful tale of love.

At last a third letter arrived, but it brought little joy to her heart. It was extravagant in terms of affection, but somehow it fell short of the true thing, for its ardour was that of a mind preoccupied, and underneath all ran a current of inherent selfishness. It delighted in the activity of his life, it was full of hope, of promise of happiness for them both in the future, but it had no solicitude for Guida in the present. It chilled her heart—so warm but a short season ago—that Philip to whom she had once ascribed strength, tenderness, profound thoughtfulness, should concern himself so little in the details of her life. For the most part, his letters seemed those of an ardent lover who knew his duty and did it gladly, but with a self-conscious and flowing eloquence, costing but small strain of feeling.

In this letter he was curious to know what the people in Jersey said about their marriage. He had written to Lorenzo Dow and her grandfather, he said, but had heard afterwards that the vessel carrying the letters had been taken by a French privateer; and so they had not arrived in Jersey. But of course she had told her grandfather and all the island of the ceremony performed at St. Michael's. He was sending her fifty pounds, his first contribution to their home; and, the war over, a pretty new home she certainly should have. He would write to her grandfather again, though this day there was no time to do so.

Guida realised now that she must announce the marriage at once. But what proofs of it had she? There was the ring Philip had given her, inscribed with their names; but she was sophisticated enough to know that this would not be adequate evidence in the eyes of her Jersey neighbours. The marriage register of St. Michael's, with its record, was stolen, and that proof was gone. Lastly, there were Philip's letters; but no—a thousand times no!—she would not show Philip's letters to any human being; even the thought of it hurt her delicacy, her self-respect. Her heart burned with fresh bitterness to think that there had been a secret marriage. How hard it was at this distance of time to tell the world the tale, and to be forced to prove it by Philip's letters. No, no, in spite of all, she could not do it—not

yet. She would still wait the arrival of his letter to her grandfather. If it did not come soon, then she must be brave and tell her story.

She went to the Vier Marchi less now. Also fewer folk stood gossiping with her grandfather in the Place du Vier Prison, or by the well at the front door—so far he had not wondered why. To be sure, Maitresse Aimable came oftener; but, since that notable day at Sark, Guida had resolutely avoided reference, however oblique, to Philip and herself. In her dark days the one tenderly watchful eye upon her was that of the egregiously fat old woman called the "Femme de Ballast," whose thick tongue clave to the roof of her mouth, whose outer attractions were so meagre that even her husband's chief sign of affection was to pull her great toe, passing her bed of a morning to light the fire.

Carterette Mattingley also came, but another friend who had watched over Guida for years before Philip appeared in the Place du Vier Prison never entered her doorway now. Only once or twice since that day on the Ecrehos, so fateful to them both, had Guida seen Ranulph. He had withdrawn to St. Aubin's Bay, where his trade of ship-building was carried on, and having fitted up a small cottage, lived a secluded life with his father there. Neither of them appeared often in St. Heliers, and they were seldom or never seen in the Vier Marchi.

Carterette saw Ranulph little oftener than did Guida, but she knew what he was doing, being anxious to know, and every one's business being every one else's business in Jersey. In the same way Ranulph knew of Guida. What Carterette was doing Ranulph was not concerned to know, and so knew little; and Guida knew and thought little of how Ranulph fared: which was part of the selfishness of love.

But one day Carterette received a letter from France which excited her greatly, and sent her off hot-foot to Guida. In the same hour Ranulph heard a piece of hateful gossip which made him fell to the ground the man who told him, and sent him with white face, and sick, yet indignant heart, to the cottage in the Place du Vier Prison.