



A CONFESSION.

Dear little boy, with wondering eyes
That for the light of knowledge yearn,
Who have such faith that I am wise
And know the things that you would learn.

Though oft I shake my head and smile
To hear your childish questions flow,
I must not meet your faith with guile;
I cannot tell, I do not know.

Dear little boy, with eager heart,
Forever on the quest of truth,
Your riddles oft are past my art
To answer to your tender youth.

But some day you will understand
The things that now I cannot say,
When life shall take you by the hand
And lead you on its wondrous way.

Dear little boy, with hand in mine,
Together through the world we fare,
Where much that I would fain divine
I have not yet the strength to bear.

Like you with riddling words I ask,
Like you I hold another hand,
And haply when I do my task,
I, too, shall understand.

—F. McArthur, in Youth's Companion.

A ROSE OF NORMANDY

By WILLIAM R. A. WILSON

CHAPTER VIII.—CONTINUED.

"A contemptible dog that," he said, looking steadily at him, "who would subject a lady to such indignity and alarm; worthy only to be spat upon."

The topic of conversation changed, and Tonti a prey to a mixture of emotions, wishing to be alone, sauntered slowly away from the circle where he had been. A moment later a hand was laid upon his shoulder and a voice deep with passion exclaimed:

"You may have an opportunity to spit upon the contemptible cur you mention, sir capitaine, or be appropriately spitted by my sword;" and at the same instant a gauntlet was thrown at his feet.

Tonti looked up, and seeing it was the Comte de Miron who spoke, carefully brushed away at the spot on his shoulder where his fingers had rested and replied contemptuously:

"You know the recent edict of the king against duelling; you are safe in your offer."

The Comte flushed. "Drive in a coach to-morrow at noon along the Chemin de Clamar; I shall meet you coming from the other direction. Our drivers can be instructed to collide opposite Mont Parnasse; we can leap forth, and with the collision as a pretext we can fight as though it were a sudden matter. No seconds need be present, so that one may know."

"I accept," exclaimed Tonti, picking up the glove.

"With swords?" asked the Comte.

"With swords."

"A l'outrance?"

"To the very death."

CHAPTER IX.

DESCRIBES A ROADSIDE MEETING, A WARNING, AND A FLIGHT.

When Tonti had breakfasted the next morning he explained to Pompon the nature of his drive, and ordered him to have a coach waiting in front of the Louvre at 11 o'clock. He then sat down and wrote a letter to La Salle, explaining everything, leaving to him whatever share of the buried treasure Pompon was willing to give him, and wishing him well in his explorations and expressing sincere regret that a question of honor had come up for settlement just as they were about to start. He sealed and addressed it, with instructions to Pompon to deliver same in case of his death. He then divested himself of a portion of his clothing and practiced for a full hour making passes, feints, and guards, so that his joints and muscles would not be stiff when the time of need arrived.

Pompon, who had been sent to order a coach, not having returned, and it now being a few minutes before 11, he left a note of farewell for him on the table, and, girding on his sword, placed the handkerchief with the letter "R" upon it within his bosom and left the house. Luckily he had brought his cloak with him, for he found upon reaching the street that a fine rain was falling. At the Louvre he found a coach waiting, and he was soon rolling across the nearest bridge, through the Porte Dauphin, along the Rue du Four and into the Rue de Chasse Mjdy, then past the establishment of Les Religieuses du St. Esprit on the Chemin de Clamar. By this time the city was left behind, and they drove through a sparsely built suburban region, back of the Convent des Chartreuses. The open fields in this quarter were favorite duelling grounds, especially those about a slight elevation of ground called Mont Parnasse, which they now approached.

Knowing that the carriage containing the Comte de Miron would soon meet him, and that the collision which was to be the pretext of the duel was imminent, he withdrew the handkerchief from its hiding-place and kissed it gently before returning it. Then having loosened his sword in its sheath, he awaited the end impatiently. Presently he heard the warning shouts of his driver, mingled with oaths and imprecations from another tongue. A few seconds later came a shock that almost threw him from his seat. The coach stopped and, alighting, he found the vehicle with which they had collided on its side in the ditch, with the Comte de Miron climbing through its open door, face spattered with mud

and his temper not improved by the knowledge of the appearance he knew he must present.

Together they walked across the field some 50 paces' distance from their carriages. Tonti's driver accompanying them to render any assistance needed in removing their outer garments, while the other remained with the horses. The preliminaries being arranged, the two men faced each other.

"En garde!" cried the Comte de Miron between his teeth.

"En garde!" came from Tonti in calm and measured tones.

The swords touched, crossed, and the fight was on. Both learned in a few moments that neither had a weak opponent before him. Each tried the other with all the commoner thrusts only to find him ready with a parry. At last Tonti, in order to tire his antagonist and thus make it easier when he next attacked him, maintained the defensive only. His thoughts wandered away from the scene before him and he seemed to stand in the same room he had visited yesterday, gazing upon the face that he realized now that he loved. Only, instead of her eyes following the printed pages of a book, they looked into his own with a friendly gaze. But as he looked they suddenly changed and a gleam of terror and horror filled them, as though they saw a terrible sight, and her hand was raised as though in warning.

At this instant the Comte de Miron pretended to slip, and Tonti involuntarily raised his sword-point to enable him to recover his footing. The look of terror in the face of the one he loved brought him suddenly back to a full realization of his surroundings. But it was too late. The Comte, counting upon the honor and generosity of his foe when he perceived his misstep, and seeing the point of Tonti's sword raised, made a sudden lunge, a twist and upward movement, and Tonti's sword was hurled from his hand and lighted point downward in the earth just outside his reach. Then Tonti realized his danger, for his foe, with unrepressed hatred gleaming in his eye, made for him as he stood unarmed and defenseless before him. It was but a second's duration, but Tonti's thought flew back to the street where they had met and he heard again the voice he loved cautioning him against the treachery of the man before him. He saw the loved eyes quiver, yet gaze at him admiringly as he met his death bravely and without flinching. Fully realizing the impossibility of escaping assassination, he resolved not to shrink before his treacherous foe, so with a look of contempt in his eye and the words "For you, my Rose," in his heart he awaited the impact of the deadly weapon.

Just as the end of his enemy's sword was about to enter his breast, the clicking of other steel was heard and the point was struck up harmlessly in the air. Tonti's driver, who had stood very near during the combat, seeing his plight, had suddenly dropped the cloaks he was holding, and, drawing a sword from the depths of the great-coat in which he was muffled, had parried the blow. "Wretch!" he said, contemptuously, to the Comte de Miron. Tonti with a spring recovered his sword and returned to the attack. Before he had had but little heart in the battle, meaning only to inflict some trifling wound, knowing that were he involved in any mortal combat the chances would be that Colbert would seize that as a pretext for detaining him, despite the king's protection, and La Salle would have to sail without him. But now, blinded by the fury aroused by the vile trick of his opponent, he attacked him with all his skill and strength.

"Before I count ten, M. le Comte," he said, slowly, "you shall die," and beginning to count each stroke, he pressed his antagonist hard, reserving a half-forgotten trick of the sword, learned in Italy, for the final. The Comte de Miron responded with equal fury of attack and defense, but as he heard Tonti count so confidently and saw the smile of triumph on his face he weakened, and the sacrilegious charm he wore seemed to burn a bright red spot in his chest as a sign to Tonti where to strike.

"One!"

A spark flew between the blades.

"Two!"

The sword play became more furious.

"Three!"

The combatants shifted their positions continuously.

"Four!"

The breathing of the Comte de Miron grew shorter and more rapid.

"Five!"

His thrusts became wilder and his face flushed, in strong contrast with the coolness and precision of his opponent.

"Six!"

A terrible oath escaped his lips as Tonti calmly turned aside a quick stroke on which he had counted much.

"Seven!"

His attack weakened, and he glanced out of the corner of his eye to see if Tonti's driver were near enough for him to suddenly seize and pull the man in front of him to receive the fatal blow in his body, knowing that before Tonti could withdraw his sword he would be at the Comte's mercy.

"Eight!"

The base plan was impossible of execution, as the driver now stood far to one side. He then thought of escape by flight, gaining one of the horses and fleeing to the city. There were no seconds present to witness this cowardly action and he could easily bribe the two drivers to discredit any version Tonti might give of the affair. This, too, he perceived was futile, as Tonti stood between him and the road where the horses were standing.

"Nine!"

All hope was now gone and a nameless terror seized him. That cursed

charm burned still brighter over his heart. He vaguely thought of throwing away his sword and falling on his knees to implore mercy from his foe. Had this plan occurred to him when he was still himself, calm and reasonable, he might have done so, but now, with his brain a-whirl and the shattering fear in possession of him, he judged Tonti by his own standards of honor and believed that he would in turn assassinate him in cold blood even as he had attempted to do himself but a short time before. His last hope was gone. Perhaps the charm would save him yet.

"Ten!"

A cry of fear broke from him and with it came a last appeal to Satan for assistance.

At the word Tonti executed the stroke he had planned, his foe's sword was turned, and his own sword-point running along inside his guard entered his breast above the heart, and he sank to the ground with a groan, while a red stream gushed from his mouth and chest.

"Dead dogs do not bite; still, this is bad work, mon ami; we must leave quickly," said a familiar voice; and Tonti, looking into the muffled face of his driver, recognized Pompon. Before they could say anything further the driver of the other carriage ran up and presented a note to Tonti. It was written in a feminine hand and ran as follows:

The death of the Comte de Miron will be promptly avenged. You must flee at once without returning to the city. Obey whatever the bearer of this note suggests.

It was unsigned. Tonti was suspicious, so, handing the note to Pompon, he questioned the driver, endeavoring to elicit from him some information as to the identity of the writer, but it was of no avail.

"I was to tell you that behind yonder clump of trees you would find two horses. Take them and set out for Etampes. Take this ring, and when asked by any one to show it, produce it and you will be helped to La Rochelle and kept in hiding until your ship sails. Surrender it when you reach the end of your road to whomsoever asks for it. Further than that I cannot speak, but I pray you make haste."

Pompon approached during this speech.

"His advice is good. If it is treachery we can be caught. If we return to the city we shall surely not escape. I prefer the chances of treachery in the open country to a certainty of the Bastille in Paris. It is better to make conditions in the brush than in prison. Thinking some such emergency might arise I brought some of your clothes, our supply of money, and a few things for myself. They are under the seat of my carriage. I shall get them."

Tonti finally yielded, and the two leaving the dying man in care of the agent of their unknown friend, they proceeded in the direction pointed out. Behind the trees stood two magnificent English horses, all ready for the road, with provender for beast, and food and drink for the men attached to the saddle, while on one was tied a little bag of money to provide against emergencies.

"We shall return this at the first relay," said Tonti, as they swung into the road at a good gallop. "Ma foi! I do not object to using a stranger's horses to make my escape, but I will not touch his gold."

"Judging by the fodder for the horses, they think that there is urgent need of our not losing time by stopping to feed them. We have ten leagues before us and that means five good hours of saddle work. However, with another man's horses and your own whip one can accomplish a great deal," was Pompon's advice.

As they warmed to their task, the horses showed their splendid breeding and staying powers. On they went all the afternoon through the heavy rain that had closed down upon them. Towards dark the signs of approach to a town, much larger than the villages they had passed through, warned them of their first halting-place.

Just before crossing a small bridge two men sprang out and seized both horses by the bridles; at the same time each presented a loaded pistol at their heads.

"We want no money, gentlemen," came a gruff voice from one of them, "we need jewelry. Have you any rings about you?"

Tonti looked at Pompon, who nodded. He then handed the ring which the unknown had provided them with to the speaker, who took it, and, after disappearing to some nook where he had the means of making a light to examine it, returned in a few moments.

"They are the ones," said he to his companion, as he returned the ring to Tonti. At this the bridles were released and the men removed their hats. "You must be in Orleans by morning," the leader said, respectfully. "Wait here and refresh yourselves with the food and wine you have with you. We shall return shortly, bringing fresh horses."

In due time they were on their way again on new mounts, feeling heartened by the wine and food consumed. On through the drizzling night they went, Pompon showing a strange familiarity with the road whenever any question of that character arose.

Thus they advanced, showing the tallmanic circlet whenever required and receiving in return fresh horses, a hiding-place to sleep, and different disguises, so that their progress could not be traced. On they fared through Blois, Tours and Chinon, Loudon and Parthenay, and over the mountains to Fontenay. Here their mysterious ring procured them a guide, who conducted them by a roundabout way, avoiding the city of La Rochelle itself, to the coast, and along the water's edge to a cave worn by the waves out of the rock, where they could overlook the

harbor and see the ship "Saint Honore" that was to bear them to new lands riding at anchor not half a league away. They watched it day by day, as boat-loads of provisions, cannon, soldiers, and passengers were taken out and placed on board. Their faithful guide remained with them, going out at night for food and for information relative to the progress of the vessel's lading. Thus passed several weeks, and they were beginning to weary of their confinement when news came that La Salle had arrived and that the vessel would sail at the turn of the tide the next evening. Their guide also learned that a thorough search of the ship had been made for them by the soldiers, and that a final visit would be made before dark.

At length the day darkened and the night came on. A small fisherman's boat that had been at work all the afternoon near by, drew in towards the shore as night fell, and soon a signal from their ally brought it close to them. Tonti surrendered the ring upon request and sought to repay their guide, but as in all the other cases, he refused the offered money. So helping them into the boat, he waved a good-by from shore, as they fast disappeared in the darkness.

The boatman pulled hard at the oars, and they soon found themselves nearing the ship. A few lights on her decks served to render the confusion existing there visible, but they were not bright enough to illuminate the waters about the vessel, while the noise of departure—her anchor was already raised and her small forward sails set—made a cautious approach unnecessary. At last they found themselves directly under her stern, and the rippling of the water warned them to hasten ere she got fully under weigh. By the advice of the boatman, Pompon, agile as a cat, swung himself up on to a small swinging scaffold that had been used in painting the stern of the vessel, and had been overlooked in the hurry of sailing, with a small leather pouch tied to his body that he had brought with him from Paris. Tonti then handed up his sword, and with a parting boost from the boatman soon found himself crouched alongside Pompon. A fragile, swaying seat it was indeed, but safe, for they would not dare to climb to the deck above until the vessel had cleared the harbor.

Thus did three men sail on the "Saint Honore," parting from the sunny land of France with diverse emotions. In the stern stood La Salle, looking back at the fast-receding lights of La Rochelle, murmuring the words of that plaintive song of Mary Stuart as she sailed from Calais:

"Adieu! oh plaisant pays,
Adieu! oh ma patrie,
La plus chérie, qui a nourri
Ma belle enfance—adieu!"

Yet tinged as was his mind with regret at leaving civilization and the new love that had arisen in his heart, he still looked forward with eagerness to the great task before him. All was secondary to this. For this he lived; for this he would die.

Shivering in his cramped position on the swinging stage below him, a little man with scarred face and crafty eye shook his fist in triumph at his escape from the land and the woman that had both used him so ill.

Another man beside him, as the tacking of the ship brought the distant lights in view for the last time, stretched towards the shore a hand trembling with a new and sweet emotion, as he murmured: "Adieu! my Rose, until we meet."

[To Be Continued.]

Pride of Profession.

Old Barney Maguigan was as well known on his "sweep stretch" as the bluecoats on the beat. As his work became somewhat burdensome with the increase of years, the residents of the neighborhood urged the employment of an assistant. Barney did not look upon the suggestion with much favor—it savored too strongly of the time when he should be "laid on the shelf,"—but he consented to the trial of a new hand at last, and a stout youth was engaged whose broom made quick work of the leaves and litter. "Yessir," Barney admitted, reluctantly, a few mornings later, when asked by an old friend if he did not find his assistant a good worker, "Yessir, there's no use denying he's got the muscle to swing a broom in the open; but man alive! when it comes to the fancy touches round a lamp-post or a sewer mouth, why, he's no good at all!"—Youth's Companion.

Cheering Him Up.

"Ye-es," Mr. Billings said, reluctantly, in reply to his friend's remark that Mrs. Joyce was "an awfully sweet little woman." "So cheerful! Always sunny; always looking on the bright side!" Billings' friend continued, enthusiastically.

"There's such a thing as overdoing that 'bright side' business," said Billings. "The other night I was up there and Joyce—you know how absent-minded he is?—put the lighted end of his cigar in his mouth. He jumped three feet, and was a little noisy for a minute. Right in the midst of it all Mrs. Joyce smiled blandly, and said: 'How fortunate you were, dear, to discover it at once!'—Youth's Companion.

Historic Building.

For nearly 400 years the old "Shipping House," at the end of the Breite Strasse (Broad Street) at Lubeck, has perpetuated the days of the Hansa, when the Baltic town was the first city of Germany and the word Lubeck Shipping association was law. Although originally organized for benevolent and religious purposes, this guild waxed so strong in the course of time that it actually exercised the functions of a court of justice in the latter part of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth.—From "Lubeck Shipping House," by Hugo Erichsen, in Four-Track News.

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