

‘Tis for a grand baron,
Vive le roi, la reine !
‘Tis for a grand baron,
Vive Napoléon !”

The words of the last two lines swelled out far louder than the dwarf meant, for few save Medallion and Monsieur De la Rivière had ever heard him sing. His concert-house was the Rock of Red Pigeons, his favourite haunt, his other home, where, it was said, he met the Little Good Folk of the Scarlet Hills, and had gay hours with them. And this was a matter of awe to the timid *habitants*.

At the words, “Vive Napoléon!” a hand touched him on the shoulder. He turned and saw the stranger looking at him intently, his eyes alight.

“Sing it,” he said softly, yet with an air of command. Parpon hesitated, shrank back.

“Sing it,” he insisted, and the request was taken up by others, till Parpon’s face flushed with a sort of pleasurable defiance. The stranger stooped and whispered something in his ear. There was a moment’s pause, in which the dwarf looked into the other’s eyes with an intense curiosity—or incredulity—and