

She was scratching the back of her head with her knitting needles. "No, I know it not. . . . But perhaps Pied-de-nez. . . . Say, then, Pied-de-nez!" She sent her voice after the vagrant. "Know you a Château Royal about here, Pied-de-nez—a Château *Royal*? . . . Ah, he does not answer; he is offended, M'sieur, because I gave him nothing for his bag. . . . *Tiens*, he still goes!"

"Pied-de-nez you call him? Who is he, by-the-by?"

"A chemineau, M'sieur. . . . Ah, he is gone quite. . . . Only a chemineau, M'sieur. A new one, a poor mad one. Sometimes he is very droll, like M'sieur."

"Good heavens above!" Dick Stewart sat upright very suddenly. "Am I ever droll? Like *me*, do you say?"

Merrily she laughed. "I say like M'sieur, because he tramps—like M'sieur. But M'sieur is not a chemineau. Nor a pedlar; though M'sieur carries a pack. It is a little pack, however—perhaps only linen?"

"And brushes."

"Brushes, yes," she said. "M'sieur will have very fine brushes. I have seen very fine brushes at Limoges. M'sieur is well dressed. M'sieur is a gentilhomme. M'sieur is of the high gentry, one sees that plain. Is it not so?"

"Madame, I am afraid it is," Dick Stewart said, simply enough. "If several lazy generations make it so. I belong to the illustrious race of the Faldalaldoes. But I can't help that, Madame. I wanted to be born somebody else, but couldn't quite arrange it. I assure you it is more my misfortune than my fault."

"Bien sûr," she said, with a fine democratic pity.

"Several futile generations, and some very unfortunate ones," he said gravely. "And now Madame beholds the last of us, tramping like any turnpike sailor—what you call any chemineau. And Madame wonders *why* I tramp?"

Yes, indeed she did, she said, still smiling.

"Madame, the explanation is easy: it is the better to search; I am searching for treasure."

Treasure! Searching for treasure! The knitting fell to the little woman's lap, and she also dropped several stitches. Treasure! Her eyes sparkled with comprehension, for treasure-hunting is almost a mania with the Limousin folk.