

"Come in," said the viscount, showing her the entrance.

She wished, from deference, to let him take the lead; but he said, in a solemn tone:

"Will Mademoiselle la Comtesse de Pentoëk do me the honor——"

His gesture concluded the invitation.

Guyonne entered the grotto, and at the request of the nobleman, sat on the grassy bank.

The Viscount de Ganay took off his hat, took from it a sealed paper, put his knee on the ground, and presented the paper with these words:

"Noble demoiselle, Maria Antonetti Guyonne, Comtesse of Pentoëk, suffer that the humblest of your servants offer you a copy of your baptismal certificate."

Still more astonished by the act of the viscount, than by the sight of the seals which adorned the paper, Guyonne did not move.

"Take it," said the equerry, in a gentle voice; this paper contains the proof of the illustrious origin from which you have descended."

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"Monseigneur," stammered Guyonne, "I don't understand——"

"Listen to me," said the viscount. "Hear me, noble girl; you no longer owe me the title of monseigneur. Before you, I am simply an equerry; and you, Demoiselle Guyonne, count among your ancestors, the most illustrious and the most valiant lords of Normandy and Brittany.