

advanced to the outstretched hand of the Curé, who greeted him with courtly affability. He shook hands with and nodded good-humouredly at Medallion and the Little Chemist, bowed to the avocet, and touched off his greeting to Monsieur De la Rivière with deliberation, not offering his hand—this very reserve a sign of equality not lost on the young Seigneur. He had not this stranger at any particular advantage, as he had wished, he knew scarcely why. Valmond took the seat offered him beside the Curé, who remarked presently,—

“My dear friend, Monsieur Garon, was saying just now that the spirit of France has ever been the Captain of Freedom among the nations.”

Valmond glanced quickly from the Curé to the others, a wift, inquisitive look, then settled back in his chair, and turned, bowing, towards Monsieur Garon. The avocat's pale face flushed, his long, thin fingers twined round each other and untwined, and presently he said, in his little chirping voice, so quaint as to be almost unreal,—