

more than half its magic. It would die away as the wind declined, or come in passionate crescendo. For long it seemed to Montaiglon—and yet it was too short—the night was rich with these incongruous but delightful strains. Now the player breathed some soft, slow, melancholy measure of the manner Count Victor had often heard the Scottish exiles croon with tears at his father's house, or sing with too much boisterousness at the dinners of the St Andrew's Club, for which the Leith frigates had made special provision of the Scottish wine. Anon the fingers strayed upon an Italian symphony full of languors and of sun, and once at least a dance gave quickness to the execution.

But more haunting than all was one simple strain and brief, indeed never wholly accomplished, as if the player sought to recollect a song forgot, that was repeated over and over again, as though it were the motive of the others or refrain. Sometimes Montaiglon thought the player had despaired of concluding this bewitching melody when he changed suddenly to another, and he had a very sorrow at his loss; again, when its progress to him was checked by a veering current of the wind, and the flageolet rose once more with a different tune upon it, he dreaded that the conclusion had been found in the lacuna.

He rose at last and went to the window, and tried in the wan illumination of the heavens to detect the mysterious musician in the garden, but that was quite impossible: too dark the night, too huge and profound the shadows over Doom. He went to his door and opened it and looked down the yawning stairway; only the sigh of the wind in the gun-slits occupied the stairway, and the dark was the dark of Genesis. And so again to bed, to lie with his weariness for long forgotten. He found that tantalising fragment return again and again, but fated never to be complete. It seemed, he fancied, something like a