

## THRICE.

A fair child in the standing corn  
Upon a gleamy summer morn,  
Red poppies in her bosom borne;

Her hair pale gold of dawning skies,  
Blue depths of innocence her eyes,  
Stirred with a sudden light surprise.

## II.

A maiden standing pensively  
Beside a silver flashing sea,  
She beareth ocean-flowers three;

A sweet face on a stainless heaven,  
Bright hair upon the bright wind driven,  
A foam-bow with its colours seven.

## III.

A gray sky o'er a river-mead,  
A waving wall of flowery red,  
White gleams that o'er the low plain speed.

Hark! some one singeth sweetly there,  
White water-lilies in her hair,  
The song's words are of promise fair.

## NINETY-THREE.

BY VICTOR HUGO.

## PART THE THIRD.

IN VENDÉE.

## BOOK THE FIRST.

## I.—PLUSQUAM CIVILIA BELLA.

"That of the 1st of May—yes."

"Twenty sous a post for a carriage, twelve for a gig, five sous for a van. You bought your horse at Alençon?"

"Yes."

"You have ridden all day?"

"Since dawn."

"And yesterday?"

"And the day before."

"I can see that. You came by Domfront and Mortain."

"And Avranches."

"Take my advice, citizen; rest yourself. You must be tired. Your horse is certainly."

"Horses have a right to be tired; men have not."

The host again fixed his eyes on the traveller. It was a grave, calm, severe face, framed by grey hair.

The innkeeper cast a glance along the road, which was deserted as far as the eye could reach, and said, "And you travel alone in this fashion?"

"I have an escort."

"Where is it?"

"My sabre and pistols."

The innkeeper brought a bucket of water, and, while the horse was drinking, studied the traveller, and said mentally, "All the same, he has the look of a priest."

The horseman resumed. "You say there is fighting at Dol?"

"Yes. That ought to be about beginning."

"Who is fighting?"

"One *ci-devant* against another *ci-devant*."

"You said?"

"I say that an ex-noble who is for the Republic is fighting against another ex-noble who is for the King."

"But there is no longer a king."

"There is the little fellow! The odd part of the business is that these two *ci-devants* are relations."

The horseman listened attentively. The innkeeper continued: "One is young, the other old. It is the grand-nephew who fights the great-uncle. The uncle is Royalist, the nephew a Patriot. The uncle commands the Whites, the nephew commands the Blues. Ah, they will show no quarter, I'll warrant you. It is a war to the death."

"Death?"

"Yes, citizen. Hold! would you like to see the compliments they fling at each other's heads? Here is a notice the old man finds means to placard everywhere, on all the houses and all the trees, and that he has had stuck up on my very door."

The host held up his lantern to a square of paper fastened on a panel of the double door, and, as the placard was written in large characters, the traveller could read it as he sat on his horse.

"The Marquis de Lantenac has the honour of informing his grand-nephew, the Viscount Gauvain, that if the Marquis has the good fortune to seize his person he will cause the Viscount to be decently shot."

"Here," added the host, "is the reply."

He went forward, and threw the light of the lantern upon a second placard placed on a level with the first upon the other leaf of the door. The traveller read:

"Gauvain warns Lantenac that, if he takes him, he will have him shot."

"Yesterday," said the host, "the first placard was stuck on my door, and this morning the second. There was no waiting for the answer."

The traveller in a half-voice, and as if speaking to himself, uttered these words, which the innkeeper heard without really comprehending.

"Yes; this is more than war in the country, it is war in families. It is necessary, and it is well. The grand restoration of the people must be bought at this price."

And the traveller raised his hand to his hat and saluted the second placard, on which his eyes were still fixed.

The host continued: "So, citizen, you understand how the matter lies. In the cities and the large towns we are for the Revolution, in the country they are against it; that is to say, in the towns people are Frenchmen, and in the villages they are Bretons. It is a war of the townspeople against the peasants. They call us clowns, we call them boors. The nobles and the priests are with them."

"Not all," interrupted the horseman.

"Certainly not, citizen, since we have here a viscount against a marquis."

Then he added, to himself—"And I feel sure I am speaking to a priest."

The horseman continued: "And which of the two has the best of it?"

"The viscount so far. But he has to work hard. The old man is a tough one. They belong to the Gauvain family—nobles of these parts. It is a family with two branches; there is the great branch, whose chief is called the Marquis de Lantenac, and there is the lesser branch, whose head is called the Viscount Gauvain. To-day the two branches fight each other. One does not see that among trees, but one sees it among men. This Marquis de Lantenac is all-powerful in Brittany; the peasants consider him a prince. The very day he landed, eight thousand men joined him; in a week, three hundred parishes had risen. If he had been able to get foothold on the coast, the English would have landed. Luckily this Gauvain was at hand—the other's grandnephew—odd chance! He is the republican commander, and he has checkmated his great-uncle. And then, as good luck would have it, when this Lantenac arrived, and was massacring a heap of prisoners, he had two women shot, one of whom had three children that had been adopted by a Paris battalion. And that made a terrible battalion. They call themselves the Battalion of the Bonnet Rouge. There are not many of those Parisians left, but they are furious bayonets. They have been incorporated into the division of Commandant Gauvain. Nothing can stand against them. They mean to avenge the women, and retake the children. Nobody knows what the old man has done with the little ones. Suppose those babies had not been mixed up in the matter—the war would not be what it is. The viscount is a good, brave young man; but the old fellow is a terrible marquis. The peasants call it the war of Saint Michael against Beelzebub. You know, perhaps, that Saint Michael is an angel of the district. There is a mountain named after him out in the bay. They say he overcame the demon, and buried him under another mountain near here, which is called Tombelaine."

"Yes," murmured the horseman, "Tumba Beleni, the tomb of Belenus—Bel, Belial, Beelzebub."

"I see that you are well informed."

And the host again spoke to himself. "He understands Latin! Decidedly he is a priest."

Then he resumed: "Well, citizen, for the peasants it is that war beginning over again. For them the royalist general is Saint Michael, and Beelzebub is the republican commander. But if there is a devil, it is certainly Lantenac, and if there is an angel, it is Gauvain. You will take nothing, citizen?"

"I have my gourd and a piece of bread. But you do not tell me what is passing at Dol!"

"This, Gauvain commands the exploring column of the coast. Lantenac's aim was to rouse a general insurrection, and sustain Lower Brittany by the aid of Lower Normandy, open the door to Pitt, and give a shove forward to the Vendean army, with twenty thousand English and two hundred thousand peasants. Gauvain cut this plan short. He holds the coast, and he drives Lantenac into the interior and the English into the sea. Lantenac was here, and Gauvain has dislodged him; has taken from him the Pont-au-Beau, has driven him out of Avranches, chased him out of Villedieu, and kept him from reaching Granville. He is manoeuvring to shut him up again in the Forest of Fougères, and to surround him. Yesterday everything was going well; Gauvain was here with his division. All of a sudden—look sharp!—the old man, who is skilful, made a point; information comes that he has marched on Dol. If he takes Dol and establishes a battery on Mount Dol (for he has cannon), then there will be a place on the coast where the English can land, and everything is lost. That is why, as there was not a minute to lose, that Gauvain, who is a man with a head, took counsel with nobody but himself, asked no orders and waited for none, but sounded the signal to saddle, put to his artillery, collected his troop, drew his sabre, and, while Lantenac throws himself on Dol Gauvain throws himself on Lantenac. It is at Dol that these two Breton heads will knock together. There will be a fine shock. They are at it now."

"How long does it take to get to Dol?"

"At least three hours for a troop with cannon; but they are there now."

The traveller listened, and said: "In fact, I think I hear cannon."

The host listened. "Yes, citizen; and the musketry. They have opened the ball. You would do well to pass the night here. There will be nothing good to catch over there."

"I cannot stop. I must keep on my road."

"You are wrong. I do not know your business; but the risk is great, and unless it concerns what you hold dearest in the world—"

"In truth, it is that which is concerned," said the cavalier.

"Something like your son?"

"Very nearly that," said the cavalier.

The innkeeper raised his head, and said to himself—"Still, this citizen gives me the impression of being a priest." Then, after a little reflection—"All the same, a priest may have children."

"Put the bridle back on my horse," said the traveller.

"How much do I owe you?"

He paid the man.

The host set the trough and the bucket back against the wall and returned toward the horseman.

"Since you are determined to go, listen to my advice. It is clear that you are going to Saint-Malo. Well, do not pass by Dol. There are two roads; the road by Dol, and the road along the sea-shore. There is scarcely any difference in their length. The sea-shore passes by Saint-Georges-de-Brehaigne, Cherruex, and Hyrèl-le-Vivier. You leave Dol to the south and Cancale to the north. Citizen, at the end of the street you will find the branching off of the two routes; that of Dol is on the left, that of Saint-Georges-de-Brehaigne on the right. Listen well to me; if you go by Dol, you will fall into the middle of the massacre. That is why you must not take to the left, but to the right."

"Thanks," said the traveller.

He spurred his horse forward. The obscurity was now complete; he hurried on into the night. The innkeeper lost sight of him.

When the traveller reached the end of the street where the

two roads branched off, he heard the voice of the innkeeper calling to him from afar—"Take the right!"

He took the left.

## II.—DOL.

Dol, a Spanish city of France in Brittany, as the guide-books style it, is not a town; it is a street. A great old Gothic street, bordered all the way on the right and the left by houses with pillars, placed irregularly, so that they form nooks and elbows in the highway, which is nevertheless very wide. The rest of the town is only a net-work of lanes, attaching themselves to this great diametrical street, and pouring into it like brooks into a river. The city, without gates or walls, open, overlooked by Mount Dol, could not have sustained one. The promontories of houses, which were still to be seen fifty years back, and the two-pillared galleries which bordered the street, made a battle ground that was very strong and capable of offering great resistance. Each house was a fortress in fact, and it would be necessary to take them one after another. The old market was very nearly in the middle of the street.

The innkeeper of the Croix-Brancard had spoken truly—a mad conflict filled Dol at the moment he uttered the words. A nocturnal duel between the Whites, that morning arrived, and the Blues, who had come upon them in the evening, burst suddenly over the town. The forces were unequal; the Whites numbered six thousand—there were only fifteen hundred of the Blues; but there was equality in point of obstinate rage. Strange to say, it was the fifteen hundred who had attacked the six thousand.

On one side a mob, on the other a phalanx. On one side six thousand peasants, with blessed medals on their leathern vests, white ribands on their round hats, Christian devices on their braces, chaplets at their belts, carrying more pitchforks than sabres, carbines without bayonets, dragging cannon with ropes; badly equipped, ill disciplined, poorly armed, but frantic. In opposition to them were fifteen hundred soldiers, wearing three-cornered hats, coats with large tails and wide lapels, shoulder-belts crossed, copper-hilted swords, and carrying guns with long bayonets. They were trained, skilled; docile, yet fierce; obeying like men who would know how to command. Volunteers also, shoeless and in rags too, but volunteers for their country. On the side of Monarchy, peasants who were paladins; for the Revolution, barefooted heroes, and each troop possessing a soul in its leader; the royalists having an old man, the republicans a young one. On this side, Lantenac; on the other, Gauvain.

The Revolution, side by side with its faces of youthful giants like those of Danton, Saint-Just, and Robespierre, has faces of ideal youth, like those of Hoche and Marceau. Gauvain was one of these. He was thirty years old; he had a Herculean bust, the solemn eye of a prophet, and the laugh of a child. He did not smoke, he did not drink, he did not swear. He carried a dressing-case through the whole war; he took care of his nails, his teeth, and his hair, which was dark and luxuriant. During halts he himself shook in the wind his military coat, riddled with bullets and white with dust. Though always rushing headlong into an affair, he had never been wounded. His singularly sweet voice had at command the harsh imperiousness needed by a leader. He set the example of sleeping on the ground, in the wind, the rain, and the snow, rolled in his cloak and with his noble head pillowed on a stone. His was an heroic and innocent soul. The sabre in his hand transfigured him. He had that effeminate air which in battle turns into something formidable.

With all that, a thinker and a philosopher—a youthful sage. Alcibiades in appearance; Socrates in speech.

In that immense improvisation of the French Revolution this young man had become at once a leader. His division, formed by himself, was like a Roman legion, a kind of complete little army; it was composed of infantry and cavalry; it had its scouts, its pioneers, its sappers, pontoons; and as a Roman legion had its catapults, this one had its cannon. Three pieces, well mounted, rendered the column strong, while leaving it easy to guide.

Lantenac was also a thorough soldier—a more consummate one. He was at the same time wary and hardy. Old heroes have more cold determination than young ones, because they are far removed from the warmth of life's morning; more audacity, because they are near death. What have they to lose? So very little. Hence the manoeuvres of Lantenac were at once rash and skilful. But in the main and almost always, in this dogged hand-to-hand conflict between the old man and the young Gauvain gained the advantage. It was rather the work of fortune than anything else. All good luck—even successes which are in themselves terrible—go to youth. Victory is feminine. Lantenac was exasperated against Gauvain; justly, because Gauvain fought against him; in the second place, because he was of his kindred. What did he mean by turning Jacobin? This Gauvain! His mischievous dog! His heir—for the marquis had no children—his grand-nephew, almost his grandson. "Ah," said this quasi-grandfather, "if I put my hand on him I will kill him like a dog!"

For that matter the Revolution was right to disquiet itself in regard to this Marquis de Lantenac. An earthquake followed his landing. His name spread through the Vendean insurrection like a train of powder, and Lantenac at once became the centre. In a revolt of that nature, where each is jealous of the other, and each has his thicket or ravine, the arrival of a superior rallies the scattered leaders who have been equals among themselves. Nearly all the forest captains had joined Lantenac, and, whether near or far off they obeyed him. One man alone had departed; it was the first who had joined him—Gavard. Wherefore? Because he had been a man of trust. Gavard had known all the secrets and adopted all the plans of the ancient system of civil war; Lantenac appeared to replace and supplant him. One does not inherit from a man of trust; the shoe of La Bonain did not fit Lantenac. Gavard departed to rejoin Bonchamp.

Lantenac, as a military man, belonged to the school of Frederic II.; he understood combining the great war with the little. He would have neither a "confused mass" like the great Catholic and royal army, a crowd destined to be crushed, nor a troop of guerillas scattered among the hedges and copses, good to harass, impotent to destroy. Guerilla warfare finishes nothing, or finishes ill; it begins by attacking a republic and ends by rifling a diligence. Lantenac did not comprehend this Breton war as the older chiefs had done; La Rochejacquelein was all for open country campaigns, Jean Chouan all for the forest; he would have neither Vendée nor Chouannerie; he wanted real warfare; he would make use of the peasant but he meant to depend on the soldier. He wanted bands for