Tally ho !-and away we go !"

. . . the devil's own risks! -

But the Comtesse shook her head, still

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incredulously. To her it seemed preposterous that these young men and their great leader, all of them rich, probably well-born, and young, should for no other motive than sport, run the terrible risks which she knew they were constantly doing. Their nationality, once they had set foot in France, would be no safeguard to them. Anyone found harbouring or assisting suspected royalists would be ruthlessly condemned and summarily executed, whatever his nationality might And this band of young Englishmen had, to her own knowledge, bearded the implacable and bloodthirsty tribunal of the Revolution, within the very walls of Paris itself, and had snatched away condemned victims, almost from the very foot of the guillotine. With a shudder, she recalled the events of the last few days, her escape from Paris with her two children, all three of them hidden beneath the hood of a rickety cart, and lying amidst a heap of turnips and cabbages, not daring to breathe, while the mob howeled "A la lanterne les aristos!" at that awful West Barricade.

It had all occurred in such a miraculous way; she and her husband had understood that they had been placed on the list of "suspected persons," which meant that their trial and death was but a matter of days-of hours, perhaps.

Then came the hope of salvation; the mysterious epistle, signed with the enigmatical scarlet device; the clear, peremptory directions; the parting from the Comte de Tournay, which had torn the poor wife's heart in two; the hope of reunion; the flight with her two children; the covered cart; that awful hag driving it, who looked like some horrible evil demon, with the ghastly trophy on her whip handle !

The Comtesse looked round at the quaint, old-fashioned English inn, the peace of this land of civil and religious liberty, and she closed her eyes to shut out the haunting vision of that West Barricade, and of the mob retreating panic-stricken when the old hag spoke of the plague.

Every moment under that cart she expected recognition, arrest, herself and her children tried and condemned, and these young Englishmen, under the guidance of their brave and mysterious leader, had risked their lives to save them all, as they had already saved scores of other innocent people.

And all only for sport? Impossible! Suzanne's eyes, as she sought those of Sir Andrew, plainly told him that she thought that he at any rate rescued his fellownien from terrible and death through a higher and nobler motive than his friend would have her believe

"How many are there in your brave league, Monsieur?" she asked, timidly. "Twenty all told, Mademoiselle," he replied, "one to command, and nineteen to obey. All of us Englishmen, and all pledged to the same cause—to obey our

leader and to rescue the innocent." "May God protect you all, Messieurs," said the Comtesse, fervently.

"He has done that so far, Madame." $^{\prime\prime}$ It is wonderful to me, wonderful !— That you should all be so brave, so devoted to your fellowmen-yet you are English !-- and in France treachery is rife -all in the name of liberty and fraternity'

"The women even, in France, have been more bitter against us aristocrats than the men," said the Vicomte, with a sigh.

"Ah, yes," added the Comtesse, whilst a look of haughty disdain and intense bitterness shot through her melancholy eyes. "There was that woman, Marguerite St. Just, for instance. She denounced the Marquis de St. Cyr and all his family to the awful tribunal of the

" Marguerite St. Just?" said Lord Antony, as he shot a quick and apprehensive glance across at Sir Andrew. " Marguerite St. Just ?-Surely.

"Yes!" replied the Comtesse, you know her. She was a leading actress at the Comedie Française, and she married an Englishman lately. You

Thirst know her—"
"Know her?" said Lord Antony. "Know Lady Blakeney-the most fashicnable woman in London-the wife of

the richest man in England? Of course, we all know Lady Blakeney."

"She was a school-fellow of mine at the convent in Paris," interposed Suzanne, "and we came over to England together to learn your language. I was very fond of Marguerite, and I cannot believe that she ever did anything so wicked."

"It certainly seems incredible," said Sir Andrew. "You say that she actually denounced the Marquis de St. Cyr? Why should she have done such a thing? Surely there must be some mistake-'

"No mistake is possible, Monsieur," rejoined the Comtesse, coldly. guerite St. Just's brother is a noted republican. There was some talk of a family feud between him and my cousin, the Marquis de St. Cyr. The St. Justs are quite plebeian, and the republican government employs many spies. I assure you that there is no mistake. . You had not heard this story?"

vague rumors of it, but in England no one would credit it. . . Sir Percy Blakeney, her husband, is a very wealthy man, of high social position, the intimate friend of the Prince of Wales.' . and Lady Blakeney leads both fashion and society in London.'

"That may be, Monsieur, and we shall, of course, lead a very quiet life in England, but I pray God that while I remain in this beautiful country I may never meet Marguerite St. Just.'

The proverbial wet blanket seemed to have fallen over the merry little company gathered round the table. Suzanne looked sad and silent; Sir Andrew fidgeted uneasily with his fork, whilst the Comtesse, encased in the plate-armour of her aristocratic prejudice, sat, rigid and unbending, in her straight-backed chair. As for Lord Antony, he looked extremely uncomfortable, and glanced once or twice apprehensively towards Jellyband, who

"Faith, Madame, I did hear some looked just as uncomfortable as himself. "At what time do you expect Sir Percy and Lady Blakeney?" he contrived to whisper, unobserved, to mine host. "At any moment, my lord," whispered

Jellyband, in reply. Even as he spoke, a distant clatter was heard of an approaching coach; louder and louder it grew, one or two shouts became distinguishable, then the rattle of horses' hoofs on the uneven cobble-stones, and the next moment a stable boy had thrown open the coffee-room

door, and rushed in excitedly. "Sir Percy Blakeney and my lady," he shouted at the top of his voice, "they're just arriving."

And with more shouting, jingling of harness, and iron hoofs upon the stones, a magnificent coach, drawn by four superb bays, had halted outside the porch of "The Fisherman's Rest."

(To be continued.)



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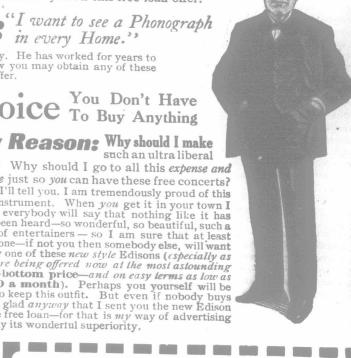
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