

THE FRENCH STATE.

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL.

[Continued.]

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE TALK OVER OUR SITUATION.

That night, as afterwards, Tassard

conceived the berth that he was used to

sleep in before he was frozen. Although

I had not then the least fear that he

would attempt any malignant tricks

which would remain in this posture,

the feeling that he lay in the

berth next but one to me made me

uneasy in spite of my reasoning; and

I was so nervous as to sleep without

being able to close my eyes. I had

been told that he would be

impossible to enter without

beating the door in.

In sober truth, the sight of the

treasure had put a sort of fever into

my imagination, of the heat and effects

of which I was not completely sensible

until I was alone in my cabin and

swinging in the darkness. That the

value of what I had seen came to ninety

or a hundred thousand pounds of

money I could not doubt; and I will

not deny that my fancy was greatly

excited by thinking of it. But there

was something else. Suppose we

should have the happiness to escape

with this treasure, then I was perfectly

certain the Frenchman would come

between me and my share of it. This

apprehension threading my heated

thoughts of the gold and silver kept me

restless during the greater part of the

night, and I also held my brains on the

stretch with devices for saving ourselves

and the treasure; yet I could not satisfy

my mind that anything was to be done

unless Nature herself assisted us in

fleeing the schooner.

However, as it happened, the gale

roared for a whole week, and the cold

was so frightful and the air so charged

with spray and hail that we were forced

to close below with the hatches on

for our lives.

I never needed to peep an inch

beyond the companion-way to view

the sky; nor for the matter of that

was there ever any occasion to leave

the cabin to go to the weather, for

the perpetual thunder of it echoed strong

in every part of the vessel below, and

the whole fabric was constantly

shivering to the blows of the falls of water

on her decks.

At first the Frenchman and I would

sit in the greatest fear imaginable, con-

stantly expecting some mighty disaster,

such as the rending of the ice under our

keel or our being swallowed up, or

the coming together of the slopes in

such a manner as to crush the ship, or

the fall upon her of ice mighty enough

to beat her flat; though perhaps this

we least feared, for unless the storm

changed the whole face of the cliffs,

there was no ice in our neighbourhood

to serve us that way. But as the

time slipped by and nothing worse

happened than the sharp movement

only in the vessel, following the heels

of a great noise like a cannon discharged

just outside; though this movement

seared us nearly out of our senses,

and held us in a manner dumbfounded

for the rest of the day; I say, the time

passing and nothing more terrifying

than what I have related happening, we

took heart and waited with some courage

and patience for the gale to break,

never doubting that we should find a

wonderful change when we surveyed

the scene from the heights.

Our life was extraordinarily dismal

and melancholy, how much so I am

unable to express. It was just the

same as living in a dungeon. There

know I and he snarped his fingers.

"I know by the date you name and

by the year that this is," said I defiantly.

He uttered a coarse French

expression and added, "You talk to prove

that I have been insensible for forty-

eight years."

"It is the fact," said I.

He looked so wild and fierce that I

drew myself erect ready for him if he

should fall upon me. Then, slowly

wagging his head whilst the anger in

his face softened out, he said, "Who

reigns in France now?"

"There is no king; he was

beheaded."

"What was his name?" said he.

"Louis the Sixteenth," I answered.

"Ha!" cried he, with an arch sneer;

"Louis the Sixteenth, hey? Are you

sure it wasn't Louis the Seventeenth?"

"He is dead too."

"This is news, Mr. Rodney," said

he scornfully.

"What you have been here," said I,

"many mighty changes have happened.

France has produced as great a general

and dangerous a villain as any of our

age beheld; his name is Buonaparte."

He shrugged his shoulders with an

air of mocking pity.

"Who is your king?" he asked.

"George the Third," said I; "God

bless him!"

"So—George and Louis—Louis and

George. I see how it is. Stick to your

dates, sir. But, my friend, never set

up as a schoolmaster."

"What you seemed to delight him, and

he burst into a loud laugh.

"Eighteen hundred and one!" he

cried. "A man I knew once lost ten

thousand livres at a coup. What do

you think happened? They settled in

him here?" he asked his belly. "he

went about bragging to everybody that

he was made of money, and was nick-

named the walking bourse. One day

he asked a friend to dine with him;

when the bill was presented he felt in

his pockets, and exclaimed, "I left my

purse at home. No matter; there is

plenty here;" with which he seized a

table-knife and ripped himself open.

Eighteen hundred and one, d'ye call it?

Soit. But let it be your secret, my

friend. The world will not love you

for making it fifty years older than it

is."

It was ridiculous to attempt to

combat such obstinacy as this, and as

the subject produced nothing but

excitement and irritation, I dropped it

and meddled with it no more, leaving

him to his conviction that I was cracked

in this one particular. In fact, it was

a matter of no consequence at all; what

came very much closer home was the

business of our deliverance, and over

this we talked long and very earnestly,

for he forgot to be mean and fierce

and boastful, and I to dial and fear him,

when we spoke of getting away with

our treasure, and returning to our

native home.

The current year promises to be

crowded with stirring events.

In the United States the entrance of

new issues into the political arena has

been followed by a change of adminis-

tration. The great economic question of

tariff reform has been introduced, and

is now committed to a Congress almost

equally divided between the two parties.

Europe is a vast camp. Army corps

of the frontiers and millions of men await

the signal for the most gigantic war

ever waged. The Herd's new-gathering

is unequalled. Its correspondents dot

the globe, and are spreading the rumour

of their efforts before the Herald's

columns. All the news of America will

companion's mind off his nauseous and

revolting recollections, so that it was

only now and again when he had

drained a full bowl, and his little eyes

danced in their thick-lashed caves, that

he regarded us with his memories of

murder, rapine, plank-walking, hangings,

treacheries of all kinds, and crucifixes

too barbarous for belief.

(To be continued.)

ALWAYS YOUNG.

Why is my wife so precious in my sight?

It is because her eyes are always bright.

And grow and multiply as to her age?

Neither, believe me though she's very fair,

She says, and says it with an earnest air:

"This growing old, I find, is all a fiction,

Since fortune sent me 'Favorite Prescription'."

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