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AN ADVENTURE.

When the regiment to which Trevanion belonged became part of the army of occupation in Paris, he was left at Versailles seriously ill from the effects of a sabre wound he received at Waterloo, and from which his recovery at first was exceedingly doubtful. At the end of several weeks, however, he became out of danger, and was able to receive his brother officers, whenever they were fortunate enough to obtain a day's leave of absence to run down and see him. From them he learned that one of his oldest friends in the regiment had fallen in a duel, and that two of his brother officers were dangerously wounded—one of them was not expected to survive. When he inquired as to the reasons of these many disasters, he was informed that since the entrance of the allies into Paris, the French officers boiling with rage and indignation at their defeat, and smarting under the hourly disgrace which the presence of their conquerors suggested, sought out by every means in their power, opportunities of insult: but always so artfully contrived as to render the opposite party the challenger, thus preserving to themselves the choice of the weapons. When it is called to mind that the French are the most expert swordsmen in Europe, little doubt can exist as to the issue of these combats; and, in fact, scarcely a morning passed without three or four English or Prussian officers being carried through the Barriere de l'Étoile, if not dead, at least seriously wounded, and condemned to carry with them through life the inflictions of a sanguinary and savage spirit of revenge.

When Trevanion listened to this sad recital, and scarcely did a day come without adding to the long catalogue of disasters, he at once perceived that the quiet deportment and unassuming demeanour which so strongly characterized the English officer, were construed by their French opponents into evidences of want of courage, and saw that to so systematic a plan of slaughter no common remedy could be applied, and that 'coup d'état' was absolutely necessary to put it down and for ever.

In the history of these sanguinary redcontres, one name was continually recurring, generally as the principal, sometimes the instigator of the quarrel. This was an officer of a chasseur regiment, who had the reputation of being the best swordsman in the whole French army, and was no less distinguished for his 'skill at fence,' than his uncompromising hatred of the British, with whom alone, of all the allied forces, was he ever known to come in contact. So celebrated was the 'Capitaine Augustin Gendemar' for his pursuits, that it was well known at that time in Paris, that he was the President of a duelling club, associated for the express and avowed object of provoking to insult, and as certainly dooming to death, every English officer upon whom they could fasten a quarrel.

The Cafe Philidor, at that period in the Rue Vivienne, was the rendezvous of this respectable faction, and here 'le Capitaine' reigned supreme, received accounts of the various 'affaires' which were transacting—counselling and plotting for the future. His ascendancy among his countrymen was perfectly undisputed, and being possessed of great muscular strength, with that peculiarly 'farouche' exterior, without which courage is nothing in France, he was in every way calculated for the infamous leadership which he assumed.

It was, unfortunately, to this same cafe being situated in what was called the English quarter, that the officers of the 42d regiment were in the habit of resorting, totally unaware of the plots by which they were surrounded, and quite unsuspecting the tangled web of deliberate and cold-blooded assassination in which they were involved; and here took place the quarrel, the result of which was the death of Trevanion's friend, a young officer of great promise, and universally beloved in his regiment.

As Trevanion listened to these accounts, his impatience became daily greater that his weak state should prevent his being among his brother officers, when his advice and assistance were so imperatively required, and where, amid all the solicitude for his perfect recovery, he could not but perceive they ardently wished for him.

The day at length arrived, and restored to something like his former self, Trevanion once more appeared in the mess room of his regiment. Amid the many sincere and hearty congratulations on his recovered looks, were not a few half-expressed hints that he might not go much out into the world for some time to come. To these friendly admonitions Trevanion replied by a good natured laugh, and a ready assurance that he understood the intended kindness, and felt in no wise disposed to be invalidated again. 'In fact,' said he, 'I have come up here to enjoy life a little, not to resign it; out amongst the sights of your gay capital, I must certainly

have a peep at your famed captain, of whom I have heard too much not to feel an interest in.'

Notwithstanding the many objections to this, made with a view to delay his visit to the Philidor to a later period, it was at length agreed that they should all repair to the cafe that evening, but upon the express understanding that every cause of quarrel should be strictly avoided, and that their stay should be merely sufficient to satisfy Trevanion's curiosity as to the personal of the renowned captain.

It was rather before the usual hour of the cafe's filling, that a number of English officers, among whom was Trevanion, entered the salon of the Philidor, having determined not to attract any unusual attention, they broke into little knots of threes and fours and dispersed through the room, where they either sipped their coffee or played at dominos, then, as now, the staple recourse of a French cafe.

The clock over the 'comptoir' struck eight, and at the same instant a waiter made his appearance, carrying a small table which he placed beside the fire, and having trimmed a lamp, and placed a large fauteuil before it, was about to withdraw, when Trevanion, whose curiosity was roused by the singularity of these arrangements, determined upon asking for whose comfort they were intended. The waiter stared for a moment at the question with an air as if doubting the seriousness of him who put it, and at last replied—'Pour Monsieur le Capitaine, je crois,' with a certain tone of significance upon the latter words.

'Le Capitaine! but what captain,' said he carelessly; 'for I am a captain, and that gentleman there—and there too is another,' at the same instant throwing himself listlessly into the well cushioned chair, and stretching out his legs at full length upon the hearth.

The look of horror which this quiet proceeding on his part elicited from the poor waiter, so astonished him that he could not help saying—'Is there anything the matter with you my friend! are you ill?'

'No, monsieur, not ill; nothing the matter with me; but you, sir; oh, you, sir, pray come away.'

'Me,' said Trevanion; 'me; why, my good man, I was never better in my life; so now just bring me my coffee and the Moniteur, if you have it; there, don't stare that way, but do as I bid you.'

There was something in the assured tone of these few words that either overawed or repressed every rising feeling of the waiter, for his interrogator: for, silently handing his coffee and the newspaper, he left the room—not however without bestowing a parting glance so full of terror and dismay, that our friend was obliged to smile at it. All this was the work of a few minutes, and not until the noise of new arrivals had attracted the attention of his brother officers, did they perceive where he had installed himself, and to what danger he was thus, as they supposed, unwittingly, exposed.

It was now, however, too late for remonstrance; for already several French officers had noticed the circumstance, and by their interchange of looks and signs, openly evinced their satisfaction at it, and their delight at the catastrophe which seemed inevitable to the luckless Englishman.

In perfect misery at what they conceived their own fault, in not apprising him of the sacred character of that place, they stood silently looking at him as he continued to sip his coffee, apparently unconscious of every thing and person about him.

There was now a more than ordinary silence in the cafe, which was at all times remarkable for the quiet and noiseless demeanour of its frequenters, when the door was flung open by the ready waiter, and the Capitaine Augustin Gendemar entered. He was a large squarely-built man, with a most savage expression of countenance, which a bushy beard and shaggy overhanging moustache served successfully to assist: his eyes were shaded by deep, projecting brows, and long eye brows slanting over them, and increasing their look of piercing sharpness; there was in his whole air and demeanour that certain French air of swaggering bullyism which ever remained in those who, having risen from the ranks, maintained the look of ruffianly defiance, which gave early character for courage peculiar merit.

To the friendly salutations of his countrymen he returned the slightest and coldest acknowledgments, throwing a glance of disdain around him as he wended his way to his accustomed place beside the fire; this he did with as much of noise and swagger as he could well contrive; his sabre and sabretasch clanking behind, his spurs jangling, and his heavy step made purposely heavier to draw upon him the notice and attention he sought for. Trevanion alone testified no consciousness of his entrance, and appeared to

tally engrossed by the columns of his newspaper, from which he never lifted his eyes for an instant. Le Capitaine at length reached the fire place, when, no sooner did he behold his accustomed seat in the possession of another, than he absolutely started back with surprise and anger.

What might have been his first impulse, it is hard to say; for, as the blood rushed to his face and forehead, he clenched his hands firmly, and seemed for an instant as he eyed the stranger like a tiger, about to spring upon his victim: this was but for a second, for turning rapidly round towards his party, he gave them a look of peculiar meaning, showing two rows of white teeth, with a grin which seemed to say, 'I have taken my line: and he had done so. He now ordered the waiter, with a voice of thunder, to bring him a chair; this he took roughly from him, and placed, with a crash on the floor, exactly opposite to that of Trevanion, and so near as scarcely to permit of his sitting down upon it. The noisy vehemence of this last action at last appeared to have aroused Trevanion's attention, for he now for the first time looked up from his paper, and quietly regarded him *vis-a-vis*. There could not in the world be a stronger contrast to the bland look and courteous expression of Trevanion's handsome features, than the savage scowl of the enraged Frenchman, in whose features the strong and ill-repressed workings of passion were twitching and distorting every lineament and line; indeed no words could ever convey, one-half so forcibly as did that look, insult—open, palpable, deep, determined, insult.

Trevanion, whose eyes had been merely for a moment lifted from his paper, again fell, and he appeared to take no notice whatever of the extraordinary proximity of the Frenchman, still less of the savage and insulting character of his looks.

Le Capitaine, having thus failed to bring on an *eclaircissement* he sought for, proceeded to accomplish it by other means; for, taking the lamp, by the light of which Trevanion was still reading, he placed it at his side of the table, and, at the same instant, stretching across his arm, he plucked the newspaper from his hand, giving at the same moment a glance of triumph towards the bystanders, as though he would say, 'you see what he must submit to.' Words cannot describe the astonishment of the British officers, as they beheld Trevanion, under this gross, open insult, content himself by a slight smile and half bow, as if returning a courtesy, and then throw his eyes downwards, as if engaged in deep thought, while the triumphant sneer of the French, at this unaccountable conduct, was absolutely maddening to them to endure.

But their patience was destined to submit to stronger proof, for at this instant le Capitaine stretched forth one of his enormous legs, cased in his massive jack boot, and with a crash deposited the heel upon the foot of their friend, Trevanion. At length he is roused, thought they, for a slight flush of crimson flitted across his cheek, and his upper lip trembled with a quick spasmodic twitching; but both these signs were over in a second, and his features were as calm and unmoved as before, and his only appearance of consciousness of the affront was given by his drawing back his chair, and placing his legs beneath it as if for protection.

This last insult, and the tame forbearance with which it was submitted to, produced all their opposite effects upon the bystanders, and looks of ungovernable rage and derisive contempt were every moment interchanging; indeed, were it not for the all-absorbing interest which the two great actors in the scene had concentrated upon themselves, the two parties must have come at once into open conflict.

The clock of the cafe struck nine, the hour at which Gendemar always retired, so calling to the waiter for his *petite verre* of brandy, he placed his newspaper upon the table, and putting both elbows upon it, and his chin upon his hands, he stared full in Trevanion's face, with a look of the most derisive triumph, meant to crown the achievements of the evening. To this, as to all his former insults, Trevanion appeared still insensible, and merely regarded him with a never changing smile: the *petite verre* attracted; le Capitaine took it in his hand, and with a nod of most insulting familiarity, saluted Trevanion, adding with a loud voice, so as to be heard on every side—"a votre courage, Anglais." He had scarcely swallowed the liquor when Trevanion rose slowly from his chair, displaying to the astonished gaze of the Frenchman the immense proportions and gigantic frame of a man known as the largest officer in the British Army; with one stride he was beside the chair of the Frenchman, and with the speed of lightning, he seized his nose by one hand, while with the other he grasped his lower jaw, and wrenching open his mouth with the strength of an ogre, he spat down his throat.