

French Embassy at Vienna, and served as volunteer in some of the Austrian campaigns against the Turks. He visited also in the Ambassador's service several of the smaller courts of Germany, and was sent on a secret mission to Italy. On his way through Switzerland he accidentally made acquaintance with General Lefort, the Czar of Muscovy's confidential friend and adviser. That able man was not long in discovering the more than ordinary abilities of the young Breton gentilhomme. By his advice, and through his interest, Henri d'Auban entered the Russian service, advanced rapidly from post to post, and was often favorably noticed by Peter the Great. He seemed as likely to attain a high position at that monarch's court as any foreigner in his service. His knowledge of military science, and particularly of engineering, having attracted the sovereign's attention on several occasions when he had accompanied General Lefort on visits of military inspection, the command of a regiment and the title of Colonel were bestowed upon him. But just as his prospects appeared most brilliant, and his favor with the Emperor was visibly increasing, he secretly left Russia and returned to France. Secrecy was a necessary condition of departure in case of foreigners in the Czar's service. However high in his favor, and indeed by reason of that favor they were no longer free agents—his most valued servants being only privileged serfs, bound to his dominions by laws which could only be evaded by flight—permission was hardly ever obtained for a withdrawal, which was considered as a sort of treason.

Colonel d'Auban's abandonment of the Russian service excited the surprise of his friends. Some painful thoughts seemed to be connected with the resolution which had cut short his career. He disliked to be questioned on the subject, and evasive answers generally put a stop to such inquiries. He had, however, reached an age when it is difficult to enter on a new career; when old associations on the one hand, and youthful competitors on the other, stand in the way of a fresh start in life. After six or seven years' absence from his country, he scarcely felt at home in France. His acquaintances thought him changed. The eager ambitious youth had become a quiet thoughtful man. But if the enthusiasm of his character was sub-

dued, its energy was in no wise impaired. Youthful enthusiasm, in some natures, simply evaporates and leaves nothing behind it but frivolity; in others it condenses and becomes earnestness.

At this turning moment one of the insignificant circumstances which often influence a person's whole destiny directed Colonel d'Auban's thoughts to the New World. In Europe, and especially in France, a perfect fever of excitement was raging on the subject of colonization. The rich territories on the banks of the Mississippi seemed a promised land to speculators of all classes and nations. The eagerness with which Law's system was hailed in Paris, and the avidity which sought to secure a share in the fabulous prospects of wealth held out to settlers in the new France, had never known a parallel. This fever was at its height when one day the ex-favorite of the Czar happened to meet in the Luxembourg gardens an old school-fellow, who, the instant he recognized his comrade at Vannes, threw himself into his arms, and poured forth a torrent of joyful exclamations. This was the Vicomte de Harlay, a wealthy, good-natured, eccentric Parisian, who had employed his time, his wit, and his means since he had come of age, in committing follies, wasting money, and doing kindnesses. He had already managed to get rid of one large fortune; but fortune seemed to have a fancy for this spendthrift son of hers, and had recently bestowed upon him, through the death of a relative, a large estate, which he seemed bent upon running through with equal speed.

"My dear d'Auban! I am delighted to see you! Are you come on a mission from the polar bears? or has the Czar named you his Ambassador in Paris?"

"I have left the Russian service."

"You don't say so! Why people declared you were going to cut out Lefort and Gordon. Have you made your fortune, dear friend?"

D'Auban smiled and shook his head. "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

"Do you wish to make your fortune?"

"I should have no objection."

"What are you doing, or wishing to do?"

"I am looking out for some employment. A small diplomatic post was offered to me some time ago, but it would not have suited me at all. I wish I could get a consulship. I want hard work, and