

a small bit of galette au beurre and a dish of late strawberries.

Nevertheless it was not the need of food which had rendered me dazed and ill, nor yet the rays of the sun. When I reached the gallery once more, I sank down upon the bench in my favorite corner, and flung my hat upon the ground with a murmur of deep despondency.

Barbe, who must have felt rather than heard or seen my return, came hurrying from the other end of the house, crying joyfully, —

“You have missives from France, of course. How fares the Sieur Cadillac, and to what good post has the Regent appointed him?”

“But, Normand,” she continued, catching sight of my face, — I had been mopping my brow with my handkerchief under pretence of the heat, — “Normand, what ails you, what advices have you? Thérèse?”

“Thérèse is well, at least as to bodily health,” I responded quickly.

“And Monsieur de la Mothe — he is not dead?”

“He is worse than dead,” I made answer in desperation; “he is a prisoner in the Bastile.”

“A prisoner — the Bastile!” my wife repeated with a gasp of horror. Then, recovering herself, she laid a caressing arm about my shoulders, as if her love would ward off from me all sorrow.

“Think of it, Barbe!” I exclaimed. “My dear chevalier is shut up in the living tomb, where so many political prisoners are buried, lost to their families and friends forever.”

“But of what offence is he accused?”

“He understands not. Mayhap some spite of his enemies here in the province.”