

"See there—there is a sailing boat and by'r lady she is making signals to us to stop."

M. de Roberval was told of the strange sailing vessel and quickly came on deck, ordering the "François" to be stopped at once.

"No need of this excitement," he said, "it is only Paul de Rocheblave, a goodly seaman whom I engaged some weeks ago, but who I feared had been detained."

Marguerite raised her eyes with languid interest as the little skiff came alongside the "François." There were two men in the boat, the rough seaman whose jovial voice she could hear saluting M. de Roberval. The face of the other man she could not see for he was enveloped in a long black cloak and wore a black peaked cap pulled down over his face. Paul de Rocheblave sprang forward to grasp the rope thrown out to him and the black-cloaked figure made a movement to assist him. Marguerite trembled, there was something familiar in that tall, graceful figure. Could it be?—

#### CHAPTER IV.

The sailor they called Paul de Rocheblave sprang on deck and was warmly greeted by M. de Roberval, who drew him aside and questioned him as to the reasons of his delay in joining the expedition. All being satisfactorily explained the sailor informed the Viceroy that he had taken the liberty to bring with him a friend, who was a well-tried and courageous youth desirous of seeing the New World, of which he had heard many wondrous tales from Cartier, the Captain of St. Malo.

"Any friend of yours is welcome, my good Paul," said M. de Roberval, warmly. "I must go below now, but will speak with your companion later. He is nobly born, you say?"

The Viceroy hurried off to give some necessary orders and that night did not encounter Paul Rocheblave's friend, nor for several days did he see him, for the sailor reported that the young man was suffering severely from mal de mer and could scarcely lift his head from his pillow. He shared with him the dark uncomfortable corner hardly to be dignified by the name of cabin and the "François" was far out in mid-Atlantic before any one but Paul saw the face of the black-cloaked stranger.

The morning after his arrival, Paul de Rocheblave met Blanche, an old woman who had spent her life in the service of the De Roberval family, on the narrow stairway leading to the deck.

"Where is Mademoiselle Marguerite?" he demanded.

Blanche looked surprised as she answered stiffly,

"Mademoiselle de Roberval is on deck."

Marguerite was sitting in her favourite place at the stern of the ship watching with lack-lustre eyes the monotonous roll of the great Atlantic breakers. Her spirits had sunk to the lowest depths and she had quite abandoned any expectation of seeing Alan again. The thrill of hope which ran through her at the momentary glimpse of the cloaked stranger in the little sailing-boat had passed away, leaving her more despondent than before and she told herself angrily that the resemblance was

merely the result of her morbid imagination.

"Mademoiselle," said Blanche approaching her, "Paul the sailor, who came on board last night, desires speech with you."

"With me?" said the girl, languidly, "what can he want with me?"

"I know not, Mademoiselle, but he came to me just now and whispered mysteriously in my ear that he wished to speak with you without the knowledge of M. de Roberval. What shall I say to him, Mademoiselle, he awaits your answer."

"I will see him, Blanche. Ask him to come to me."

Blanche departed with her young mistress' message to the sailor. The old woman had been Marguerite's nurse, later on her maid and was devoted wholly to her interests. She knew all her secrets and sympathised with her in her troubles, considering M. de Roberval an unreasonable tyrant. Alan de Longpré, by virtue of a few judicious compliments and gifts had completely won her heart and she was ready to lay down her life to save him and Marguerite. Needless to say M. de Roberval knew nothing of her devotion to the course of true love, else he would surely have dismissed her from his niece's service in spite of her long residence in his family.

On receiving Marguerite's permission Paul de Rocheblave came on deck glancing cautiously around to see if there was any sign of the Viceroy. The coast was clear, only a few sailors were about and he quickly reached the spot where Mademoiselle de Roberval was seated.

"Mademoiselle," he said doffing his cap and bowing low, "I have the honour to wish you good morning."

Mademoiselle de Roberval inclined her head and motioned the sailor to take vacant seat near her, saying:

"Blanche told me you desired to speak to me."

"Yes Mademoiselle," lowering his voice "I have a most urgent message to deliver. I saw M. de Longpré yesterday."

"What Alan de Longpré?" and Marguerite rising and laying her fair white hand on the sailor's rough weather-beaten one. "Tell me I implore you my good sir, if you have news of him."

"Softly Mademoiselle, we must not be overheard. Your uncle must not see the sailor talking with his niece else his suspicions will be aroused."

"Quickly then tell me of Mr. de Longpré," said Marguerite impatiently.

"I had speech with him at St. Malo. He bade me beseech you to be true to him."

"Yet he broke faith with me," said Marguerite bitterly.

"Nay, Mademoiselle judge not so harshly. Alan de Longpré is as true as steel. He also bade me—Ah, there is M. de Roberval, I must go."

M. de Roberval was not in the best of humours that morning; circumstances had conspired, it seemed to provoke him. There were pretty jealousies amongst the members of the crew and constant bickerings between the military and naval factions. Then one of the fleet of five ships had dropped far behind the others and was nowhere to be seen. More than this, his niece's, what he was pleased to call sul- lenness, annoyed him excessively although

he flattered himself that he had got rid of her objectionable suitor and that change of scene would soon cause her to forget Alan.

Impatiently Marguerite waited for another opportunity of questioning Paul but it never came; he seemed to avoid her and she dared not seek him. The days passed slowly in monotonous similarity and the ships made good headway for those days of primitive navigation. They had been out nearly eight weeks when a sailor who had accompanied Captain Cartier on his first voyage of discovery up the St. Lawrence, announced that they would see land in less than twenty-four hours. The air grew very cold and chill winds blew on them from the ice-fields of the far north; the sky was gloomy and threatening and the welcome to the New World was not inviting to the voyagers. Nevertheless M. de Roberval was in the highest spirits at the speedy manner in which the passage across the Atlantic had been accomplished.

That night a terrible storm broke over the deep and far away could be heard the breakers dashing on the coast, judging from the sound evidently a rock-bound and inhospitable shore. The timbers of the "François" creaked and shivered but she rode the huge waves gallantly and it was not till towards midnight that any real danger was apprehended. Then the storm seemed to redouble its fury, the lightning cleft the sky, revealing a wild, angry sea beneath, the thunder clashed and reverberated in deafening peals. The crew was in confusion, women shrieked and prayed, all lost self-control when it was most needed. All did I say? No, there was one exception. M. de Roberval was perfectly calm and self-controlled and his example did much to bring the sailors to a sense of their duty. But all effort of man seemed vain, the elemental war raged above, beneath and around the devoted ship and threatened every moment to overwhelm her.

Marguerite and Blanche clung to each other in the crowded cabin murmuring prayers and certain that their last hour had come. It was indeed a very pandemonium in this cabin crowded with terror-stricken men and women expecting every moment to be launched into eternity.

Suddenly the ship seemed to be rent in twain with an awful crash, Marguerite was violently thrown from one side of the cabin to the other and after that she knew no more. A merciful oblivion came over her and it must have been several hours before she came to herself. Had she died and was she even now at the gates of Paradise? It must be so for there was Alan de Longpré standing near beseeching her to speak to him. Slowly her benumbed senses came back, she stretched out her hand and Alan came forward and clasped her in his arms kissing regardless of on-lookers, her cheeks, her hair, her lips.

This was no phantom, no ghostly spirit from the land of Hades, nor was this Paradise for she could hear the clamour of the tempest raging without, the creaking timbers of the "François." What mattered the storm to her, what mattered the howling of the winds, the raging of the storm. But Alan was beside her. With him she could face eternity with calmness, and fear not what death might bring.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]