

"Girard de St. Marc, are you a Knight of the Temple?"

The youth was startled; and for a brief space he trembled and hesitated. Then a great light burst upon him, and he gladly, proudly answered:

"Hugh de Payens was my ancestor."

"What more?"

"Jacques de Molay taught me faith; and Bertrand du Guesclin gave me hope, if I were true and brave."

"Did you know John de Croy?"

"Aye,—and Philip of Orleans and Henry of Bourbon."

"Good! Now give me the Word."

Then Girard took the second sword, as the chief drew his own, and on the Guard of the Temple the Word was given.

For a little time after this the brigand chief was silent; but at length he extended his hand, which the youth took, and spoke:

"You have seen that I am a Knight of the Temple. And I will say to you, that of all the ties that ever bound me to my fellows, the tie of that mystic brotherhood is the only one I now recognize. But that I cannot betray. I have a heart; I have a conscience; and I cannot betray the holy trust which was once upon a time so sacredly reposed in me. Wait you here till I return."

With that the powerful man turned and strode away; and at the end of a quartar of an hour he came back with Pierre and Robin in company.

"Girard, here are your two knightly jewels; and here are your other packets, with every franc that my people took from you. You have solemnly assured me that the money belonged to the widow of Geoffrey de St. Aubin. Dear Geoffrey. God rest his soul. I loved him well. Aye, boy, Geoffrey de Saint Aubin and I have sat more than once in the same conclave. But enough of that. There is the money, take it; I have bought it from my comrades at heavy expense; but I can make it up."

In the fulness of his heart the

youth besought the chief that he should retain sufficient of the money to appease the demands of his comrades; but he would not listen.

"Would you," he said, "if you had resolved to do right and justly, allow another to persuade you to be content with doing only a half of the good work? No, no,—I will do as I wish, as I first resolved. Come."

Then he led the way back to where the horses and mules were found, and thence, on foot, to the glade where they had sat by the brook, to eat their dinner. Here was found the boy who had left St. Mary that morning, holding by the bridle the horse he had then ridden. The brigand spoke a few words to the lad, and then turned to our hero and took his hand.

"Girard, I have no excuse to offer, and no regret to express, for the life I now live. If I am harsh in my judgment of my fellows, I can only say, my fellows have been harsh toward me. But none of that. It is profitless. I have one word more to say, a word for yourself: If in the time to come, you hear men speak of Paul le Diable—no matter what they say—you have it from his own lips, upon his honor as a man, that he never did wrong to one of God's poor and needy; that he never wronged a helpless orphan, nor a widow in distress. And you, of your own knowledge can affirm, that he has remained true and faithful to his vows of Templar Knighthood.

"And now, adieu. My boy will conduct you safely through the forest; and beyond that your road is direct and short. If you find Junon de Saint Aubin living, remember me to her; and assure her that she is not forgotten by Paul le Diable."

And with that the strange man turned away. He would not stop to speak further.

St. Marc reached the old chateau de St. Aubin without further adventure, where he found Madame Junon, the Marchioness, well; and when he