

He was descended from a good family of Marseilles. Destined for the navy while still young, he was sent on board ship before the Revolution, and while yet of tender years. Later, he was taken prisoner; and after many strange adventures, returned in 1793 to France; was about to marry, but having been mixed up with the disturbances of Toulon, managed to escape by a miracle to England: and learned before long that his father, mother, one brother, a sister of sixteen years of age, and his betrothed, had all been led to the guillotine, to the tune of the *Marseillaise*. Thirst for revenge, revenge on the detested Jacobins, was now his sole aim. For a long time he roved about in the Indian seas, sometimes as a privateer, at others as a slave-dealer; and was said to have caused the tri-coloured flag much damage, while he acquired a considerable fortune for himself. With the return of the Bourbons, he came back to France, and settled at Marseilles. He lived, however, very retired, and employed his large fortune solely for the poor, for distressed seamen, and for the clergy. Alms and masses were his only objects of expense. It may easily be believed, that he acquired no small degree of popularity among the lower classes and the clergy. But, strangely enough, when not at church, he spent his time with the most celebrated fencing-masters, and had acquired in the use of the pistol and the sword, a dexterity that was hardly to be paralleled. In the year 1815, when the royalist reaction broke out in La Vendée, he roved about for a long time, at the head of a band of followers. When at last this opportunity of cooling his rage was taken from him by the return of order, he looked out for some victim who was known to him by his revolutionary principles, and sought to provoke him to combat. The younger, the richer, the happier, the chosen victim was, the more desirable did he seem. The landlord told me he himself knew of seven young persons who had fallen before his redoubted sword.

The next morning at five o'clock, I was at the house of this singular character. He lived on the ground-floor, in a small simple room, where, excepting a large crucifix, and a picture covered with black crape, with the date, 1794, under it, the only ornaments were some nautical instruments, a trombone, and a human skull. The picture was a portrait of his guillotined bride; it remained always veiled, excepting only when he had slaked his revenge with blood; then he uncovered it for eight days, and indulged himself in the sight. The skull was that of his mother. His bed consisted of the usual hammock, slung from the ceiling. When I entered, he was at his devotions, and a little negro brought me meanwhile a cup of chocolate and a cigar. When he had risen from his knees, he saluted me in a friendly manner, as if we were merely going for a morning walk together; afterwards he opened a closet, took out of it a case with a pair of English pistols, and a couple of excellent swords, which I put under my arm; and thus provided, we proceeded along the quay towards the port. The boatmen seemed all to know him. "Peter, your boat!" He seated himself in the stern.

"You will have the goodness to row," he said; "I will take the tiller, so that my hand may not become unsteady."

I took off my coat, rowed away briskly, and as the wind was favorable, we hoisted sail, and soon reached Cap Verd. We could remark from afar our three young men, who were sitting at breakfast in a garden not far from the shore. This was the garden of a *restaurateur*, and was the favourite resort of the inhabitants of Marseilles. Here you find excellent fish; and also in high perfection, the famous *bollenbresse*, a national dish in Provence, as celebrated as the *olla podrida* of Spain. How many a love-meeting has occurred in this place! But this time it was not Love that brought the parties together, but Hate, his step-brother; and in Provence the one is as ardent, quick, and impatient as the other.

My business was soon accomplished. It consisted in asking the young men what weapons they chose, and with which of them the duel was to be fought. The dark-haired youth—his name was M—— L——, insisted that he alone should settle the business, and his friends were obliged to give their word not to interfere.

"You are too stout," he said to the one, pointing to his portly figure; "and you,"—to the other,—"*are going to be married*; besides, I am a first-rate hand with the sword. However, I will not take advantage of my youth and strength but will choose the pistol, unless the gentleman yonder prefers the sword."

A movement of convulsive joy animated the face of my old captain. "The sword is the weapon of the French gentleman," he said; "I shall be happy to die with it in my hand."

"Be it so. But your age?"

"Never mind; make haste, and *en garde*."

It was a strange sight: the handsome young man on one side, overbearing confidence in his look, with his youthful form full of grace and suppleness; and opposite him that long figure, half naked—for his blue shirt was furled up from his sinewy arm, and his broad scarred breast was entirely bare. In the old man every sinew was like iron wire; his whole weight resting on his left hip, the long arm—on which, in sailor fashion, a red cross, three lilies, and other marks, were tattooed—held out before him, and the cunning, murderous gaze rivetted on his adversary.

"'Twill be but a mere scratch," said one of the three friends to me. I made no reply, but was convinced beforehand that my captain, who was an old practitioner, would treat the matter more seriously. Young L——, whose perfumed coat was lying near, appeared to me to be already given over to corruption. He began the attack, advancing quickly. This confirmed me in my opinion; for although he might be a practised fencer in the schools, this was proof that he could not frequently have been engaged in serious combat, or he would not have rushed forwards so incautiously against an adversary whom he did not as yet know. His opponent profited by his ardour, and retired step by step, and at first only with an occasional ward and half thrust. Young L——, getting hotter and hotter, grew flurried; while every ward of his adversary proclaimed, by its force and exactness, the master of the art of fence. At length the young man made a lunge; the captain parried it with a powerful movement, and, before L—— could recover his position, made a thrust in return, his whole body falling