

dusty velvet chair. Then he shut the door to with a click and the wall grew smooth again.

"You never knew that was there, lad. Your father made it on my advice when you were too young to learn those things. It was to keep his treasure safe from the wild crew he had to deal with."

They came closer to the chair and looked at the body, Imbert holding the candle over it and admiring his handiwork. The dead chief lay with folded arms, precisely as in life, only the rigid contour of the limbs telling he was not asleep. The lank hair framing his face gave a ghostly depth to the hollows beneath his high cheek bones and strangest of all a long beard swept his breast. It was Memberton the bearded Indian, France's warmest ally in the west, first trophy of the Jesuits and now at peace with all theologies. Imbert reached down and produced the bark from beneath the leather jerkin, wrapped about the body. There was magic in its very touch so Biencourt thought as he felt it being bound soothingly upon his arm, while all the while the dead man slumbered peacefully on beside them.

As he was replacing his doublet which Imbert had brought to him, his eyes fell on a white edge of paper protruding from Memberton's right hand. The position of the arms had been altered by the removal of the bark, and the hand had loosened in its grasp. What was it and how had it got there? A charm for the evil spirits perhaps and he died holding it, or maybe some Jesuit mummery. The hand yielded to his efforts, he opened the paper and read aloud.

"To the Seigneur of Port Royal—greeting. I, Bernardin D'Auvergne of Bordeaux in France, gentleman, being on my death-bed and in grievous sorrow,