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CATALOGUE No. 113

trade and influence of the Bourgeois Philibert, who had become the great banker, as well as the great merchant, of the Colony, able to meet the Grand Company itself upon its own ground, and fairly divide with it the interior, as well as the exterior, commerce of the Colony.

"Where is this thing going to end?" exclaimed Bigot, sweeping from him the pile of bills of exchange that lay upon the table. "That Philibert is gaining ground upon us every day! He is now buying up army bills, and even the King's officers are flocking to him with their certificates of pay and drafts on France, which he cashes at half the discount charged by the Company."

"Give the cursed papers to the clerk and send him off, De Pean!" said Bigot.

De Pean obeyed with a grimace, and returned.

"This thing must be stopped, and shall!" continued the Intendant, savagely.

"That is true, your Excellency," said De Pean. "And we have tried vigorously to stop the evil, but so far in vain. The Governor and the Honnetes Gens, and too many of the officers themselves, countenance his opposition to the Company. The Bourgeois draws a good bill upon Paris and Bordeaux, and they are fast finding it out."

"The Golden Dog is drawing half the money of the Colony, into his coffers, and he will blow up the credit of the Friponne some fine day when we least expect it, unless he be chained up," replied Bigot.

"A merchant chien court lion," says the proverb, and so say I," replied Cadet. "The Golden Dog has barked at us for a long time; par Dieu! he bites now!—ere long he will gnaw our bones in reality, as he does in effigy upon that cursed tablet in the Rue Ruade."

Every dog has his day, and the Golden Dog has nearly had his, Cadet. But what do you advise?" asked Bigot.

"Hang him up with a short rope and a shorter shrift, Bigot! You have warrant enough if your Court friends are worth half a handful of chaff."

"But they are not worth half a

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handful of chaff, Cadet. If I hung the Bourgeois, there would be such a cry raised among the Honnetes Gens in the Colony, and the whole tribe of Jansenists in France, that I doubt whether even the power of the Marquise could sustain me."

Cadet looked quietly truculent. He drew Bigot aside. "There are more ways than one to choke a dog, Bigot," said he. "You may put a tight collar outside his throat, or a sweetened roll inside of it. Some course must be found, and that promptly. We shall, before many days, have La Corne St. Luc and

young Philibert like a couple of stag-hound in full cry at our heels about that business at the Chateau. They must be thrown off that scent, come what will, Bigot!"

The pressure of time and circumstance was drawing a narrower circle around the Intendant. The advent of peace would, he believed, inaugurate a personal war against himself. The murder of Caroline was a hard blow, and the necessity of concealing it irritated him with a sense of fear foreign to his character.

His suspicion of Angelique tormented him day and night. He had

loved Angelique in a sensual, admiring way, without one grain of real respect. He worshipped her one moment as the Aphrodite of his fancy; he was ready to strip and scourge her the next as the possible murderess of Caroline. But Bigot had fettered himself with a lie, and had to hide his thoughts under degrading concealments. He knew the Marquise de Pompadour was jealously watching him from afar. The sharpest intellects and most untiring men in the Colony were commissioned to find out the truth regarding the fate of Caroline. Bigot was like a stag brought to bay. An ordinary man would have succumbed in despair, but the very desperation of his position stirred up the Intendant to a greater effort to free himself.

He walked gloomily up and down the room, absorbed in deep thought. Cadet, who guessed what was brooding in his mind, made a sign to De Pean to wait and see what would be the result of his cogitations.

Bigot, gesticulating with his right hand and his left, went on balancing, as in a pair of scales, the chances of success or failure in the blow he meditated against the Golden Dog. A blow which would scatter to the winds the inquisition set on foot to discover the hiding-place of Caroline.

He stopped suddenly in his walk, striking both hands together, as if in sign of some resolution arrived at in his thoughts.

"De Pean!" said he, "has Le Gardeur de Repentigny shown any desire yet to break out of the Palace?"

"None, your Excellency. He is fixed as a bridge to fortune. You can no more break him down than the Pont Neuf at Paris. He lost, last night, a thousand at cards and five hundred at dice; then drank himself dead-drunk until three o'clock this afternoon. He has just risen; his valet was washing his head and feet in brandy when I came here."

"You are a friend that sticks closer than a brother, De Pean. Le Gardeur believes in you as his guardian angel, does he not?" asked Bigot, with a sneer.

"When he is drunk he does," replied De Pean; "when he is sober I care not to approach him too nearly!"

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