

The Golden Dog

By WILLIAM KIRBY, F. R. S. C.

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She looked up with well-affected indignation. "How can you think such a thing, Le Gardeur? my brother was not in my thought. It was the Intendant I wished to ask you about, — you know him better than I."

This was not true, Angelique had studied the Intendant in mind, person, and estate, weighing him scruple by scruple to the last attainable atom of information. Not that she had sounded the depths of Bigots' soul — there were regions of darkness in his character which no eye but God's ever penetrated. Angelique felt that with all her acuteness she did not comprehend the Intendant.

"You ask what I think of the Intendant?" asked he, surprised somewhat at the question.

Yes — an odd question, is it not, Le Gardeur?" and she smiled away any surprise he experienced.

"Truly I think him the most jovial gentleman that ever was in New France," was the reply; "frank and open-handed to his friends, laughing and dangerous to his foes. His wit is like his wine, Angelique: one never tires of either, and no lavishness exhausts it. In a word, I like the Intendant, I like his wit, his wine, his friends, — some of them, that is! — but above all Angelique, I like you, Angelique, and I will be more his friend than ever for your sake, since I have learned his generosity towards the Chevalier des Meloises."

The Intendant had recently bestowed a number of valuable shares in the Grand Company upon the brother of Angelique, making the fortune of that extravagant young nobleman.

"I am glad you will be his friend, if only for my sake," added she, coquettishly. "But some great friends of yours like him not. Your sweet sister Amelie shrank like a sensitive plant at the mention of his name, and the Lady de Tilly put on her gravest look to-day when I spoke of the Chevalier Bigot."

Le Gardeur gave Angelique an equivocal look at mention of his sister. "My sister Amelie is an angel in the flesh," said he. "A man need be little less than divine to meet her approval; and my good aunt has heard something of the genial life of the Intendant. One may excuse a reproving shake of her noble head."

"Colonel Philibert too! he shares in the sentiments of your aunt and sister, to say nothing of the standing hostility of his father, the Bourgeois," continued Angelique, provoked by Le Gardeur's want of adhesion.

"Pierre Philibert! He may not like the Intendant: he has reason for not doing so; but I stake my life upon his honor — he will never be unjust towards the Intendant or any man." Le Gardeur could not be drawn into a censure of his friend.

Angelique shielded adroitly the stiletto of innuendo she had drawn. "You are right," said she, craftily; "Pierre Philibert is a gentleman worthy of your regard. I confess I have seen no handsomer man in New France. I have been dreaming of one like him all my life! What a pity I saw you first, Le Gardeur!" added she, pulling him by the hair.

"I doubt you would throw me to the fishes were Pierre Philibert my rival, Angelique," replied he, merrily; "but I am in no danger: Pierre's affections are, I fancy, forestalled in a quarter where I need not be jealous of his success."

"I shall not at any rate be jealous of your sister, Le Gardeur," said Angelique, raising her face to his, suffused with a blush; "if I do not give you the love you ask for it is because you have it already; but ask no more at present from me — this, at least, is yours," said she, kissing him twice, without prudery or hesitation.

That kiss from those adored lips, sealed his fate. It was the first — better it had been the last, better he

had never been born than have drank the poison of her lips.

"Now answer me my questions, Le Gardeur," added she, after a pause of soft blandishments.

Le Gardeur felt her fingers playing with his hair, as, like Delilah, she cut off the seven locks of his strength.

"There is a lady at Beaumanoir; tell me who and what she is, Le Gardeur," said she.

He would not have hesitated to betray the gate of Heaven at her prayer; but, as it happened, Le Gardeur could not give her the special information she wanted as to the particular relation the lady stood with the Intendant. Angelique with wonderful coolness talked away, and laughed at the idea of the Intendant's gallantry. But she could get no confirmation of her suspicions from Le Gardeur. Her inquiry was for the present a failure, but she made Le Gardeur promise to learn what he could and tell her the result of his inquiries.

They sat long conversing together, until the bell of the Recolletes sounded the hour of midnight. Angelique looked in the face of Le Gardeur with a meaning smile, as she counted each stroke with her dainty finger on his cheek. When finished, she sprang up and looked out of the lattice at the summer night.

The stars were twinkling like living things. Charles Wain lay inverted in the northern horizon; Bootes had driven his sparkling herd down the slope of the western sky. A few thick tresses of her golden hair hung negligently over her bosom and shoulders. She placed her arm in Le Gardeur's, hanging heavily upon him as she directed his eyes to the starry heavens. The selfish schemes she carried in her bosom dropped for a moment to the ground. Her feet seemed to trample them into the dust, while she half resolved to be to this man all that he believed her to be a true and devoted woman.

"Read my destiny, Le Gardeur," said she, earnestly. "You are a Seminarist. They say the wise fathers of the Seminary study deeply the science of the stars, and the students all become adepts in it."

Would that my starry heaven were more propitious, Angelique, — replied he, gaily kissing her eyes. "I care not for other skies than these! My fate and fortune are here."

Her bosom heaved with mingled passions. The word of hope and the word of denial struggled on her lips for mastery. Her blood throbbed quicker than the beat of the golden pendule on the marble table; but, like a bird, the good impulse again escaped her grasp.

"Look, Le Gardeur," said she. Her delicate finger pointed at Perseus, who was ascending the eastern heavens; "there is my star. Mere Malheur, — you know her, — she once said to me that that was my natal star, which would rule my life."

Like all whose passions pilot them, Angelique believed in destiny. Le Gardeur had sipped a few drops of the cup of astrology from the venerable Professor Vallier. Angelique's finger pointed to the star Algol — that strange, mutable star that changes from bright to dark with the hours, and which some believe changes men's hearts to stone.

"Mere Malheur lied!" exclaimed he, placing his arm around her, as if to protect her from the baleful influence. "That cursed star never presided over your birth, Angelique! That is the demon star Algol."

Angelique shuddered, and pressed still closer to him, as if in fear.

"Mere Malheur would not tell me the meaning of that star, but bade me, if a saint, to watch and wait; if a sinner, to watch and pray. What means Algol, Le Gardeur?" she half faltered.

"Nothing for you, love. A fig for all the stars in the sky! Your bright eyes outshine them in radiance, and over-power them in influence. All the music of the spheres is to my discord compared with the voice of Angelique des Meloises."

As he spoke a strain of heavenly harmony arose from the chapel of the Convent of the Ursulines, where they



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