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The Golden Dog

(Le Chien D'Or.)

A Canadian Historical Romance.

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CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

The Intendant in great voice led off a macaronic verse of Moliere, that had often made merry the orgies of Versailles:

"Bene, bene, bene, respondere!
Dignus, dignus es, entrare
In nostro læto corpore."

A tintamarre of voices and a jingle of glasses accompanied the violins and tambours de Basque as the company stood up and sang the song, winding up with a grand burst at the chorus:

"Vivat! vivat! vivat! cent fois vivat!"

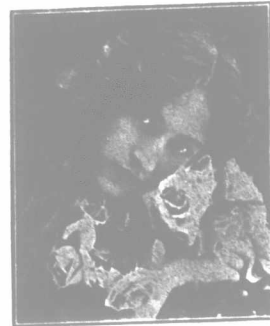
Novus socius qui tam bene parlat! Mille mille annis et manget et bibat, Fripet et friponnat!"

Hands were shaken all round, congratulations, embracings, and filthy kisses showered upon Le Gardeur to honor his admission as a partner of the Grand Company.

"And now," continued Bigot, "we will drink a draught long as the bell rope of Notre Dame. Fill up brimmers of the quintessence of the grape, and drain them dry in honor of the Friponne!"

The name was electric. It was, in the country, a word of opprobrium, but at Beaumanoir it was laughed at with true Gallic nonchalance. Indeed, to show their scorn of public opinion, the Grand Company had lately launched a new ship upon the Great Lakes to carry on the fur trade, and had appropriately and mockingly named her "La Friponne."

The toast of La Friponne was drunk with applause, followed by a wild bacchanalian song.



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The Sieur Morin had been a merchant in Bordeaux, whose bond was held in as little value as his word. He had lately removed to New France, transferred the bulk of his merchandise to the Friponne, and become an active agent of the Grand Company.

"La Friponne!" cried he; "I have drunk success to her with all my heart and throat; but I say she will never wear a night-cap and sleep quietly in our arms until we muzzle the Golden Dog that barks by night and by day in the Rue Buade."

"That is true, Morin!" interrupted Varin. "The Grand Company will never know peace until we send the Bourgeois, his master, back to the Bastille. The Golden Dog is—"

"Damn the Golden Dog!" exclaimed Bigot, passionately. "Why do you utter his name, Varin, to sour our wine? I hope one day to pull down the Dog, as well as the whole kennel of the insolent Bourgeois." Then, as was his wont, concealing his feelings under a mocking gibe, "Varin," said he, "they say that it is your marrow bone the Golden Dog is gnawing—ha! ha! ha!"

"More people believe it is your Excellency's!" Varin knew he was right, but aware of Bigot's touchiness on that point, added, as is the wont of panders to great men, "it is either yours or the Cardinal's."

"Let it be the Cardinal's, then! He is still in purgatory, and there will wait the arrival of the Bourgeois, to balance accounts with him."

Bigot hated the Bourgeois Philibert as one hates the man he has injured. Bigot had been instrumental in his banishment years ago from France, when the bold Norman count defended the persecuted Jansenists in the Parliament of Rouen. The Intendant hated him now for his wealth and prosperity in New France. But his wrath turned to fury when he saw the tablet of the Golden Dog, with its taunting inscription, glaring upon the front of the magazine in the Rue Buade. Bigot felt the full meaning and significance of the words that burned into his soul, and for which he hoped one day to be revenged.

"Confusion to the whole litter of the Golden Dog, and that is the party of the Honnetes Gens!" cried he. "But for that canting savant who plays the Governor here, I would pull down the sign and hang its master up in its stead to-morrow!"

The company now grew still more hilarious and noisy in their cups. Few paid attention to what the Intendant was saying. But De Repentigny heard him utter the words, "Oh, for men who dare do men's deeds!" He caught the eye of De Repentigny, and added, "But we are all cowards in the Grand Company, and are afraid of the Bourgeois."

The wine was bubbling in the brain of Le Gardeur. He scarcely knew what the Intendant said, but he caught the last words.

"Whom do you call cowards, Chevalier? I have joined the Grand Company. If the rest are cowards, I am not; I stand ready to pluck the peruke off the head of any man in New France, and carry it on my sword to the Place d'Armes, where I will challenge all the world to come and take it!"

"Fish! that is nothing! give me man's work. I want to see the partner in the Grand Company who dare pull down the Golden Dog."

"I dare! and I dare!" exclaimed a dozen voices at once in response to the appeal of the Intendant, who craftily meant his challenge to ensnare only Le Gardeur.

"And I dare; and I will, too, if you wish it, Chevalier!" shouted Le Gardeur, mad with wine, and quite oblivious of the thousand claims of the father of his friend, Pierre Philibert, upon him.

"I take you at your word, Le Gardeur! and bind your honor to it in the presence of all these gentle-