

CHAPTER XII

THE PROCESSION UNDER THE WINDOWS

TRAMP ! tramp ! tramp ! tramp ! The procession was passing under the windows.

Bertrand de Montville, the vindicated hero, was being borne to his soldier's grave on the hill by the fortress. Soldiers preceded him. Soldiers followed him. A mixed crowd of journalists—men from all parts of Europe—came after. And from the window above, his little pal looked down.

Max Wyndham stood beside her, the corners of his mouth drawn down and a very peculiar expression in his green eyes. He had amazed his French friend by refusing to follow the *cortège*. Even Chris did not know why, for he had clothed himself in an impenetrable cloak of reserve since Bertrand's death, and he was not apparently minded to lift it even for her benefit.

Yet she was glad to have him with her, for Noel had elected to go with Mordaunt ; and though she was quite willing to be left alone, she found Max's presence a help. She had seen but little of him until the moment that they stood together looking down upon the passing procession.

It was a grey day. Down on the shore the long waves rolled in to break in wide lines of surf up the rock-strewn beach. The thunder of their breaking mingled with the roll of muffled drums. The full honours of a soldier's funeral were to be accorded to the man who had died before France could make amends.