## THE RULING PASSION

BY HENRY VAN DYKE. THE KEEPER OF THE LIGHT.

At long distance, looking over the rence in clear weather, you might think that you saw a lonely sea gull, snowwhite, perching motionless on a cobble ay rock. Then, as your boa and the soft southern breeze, you would perceive that the cobble of rock was a rugged hill with a few bushes are stunted trees growing in the crevices and that the gleaming speck near the summ t must be some kind of a building if you were on the coast of Italy or Spain you would say a villa or a farm house. Then, as you floated still farther north and drew nearer to the coast, the desolate hill would detach itself from the mainland and become a mountain isle, with a flock of smaller islets clustering around it as a brood of wild ducks keep close to their mother, and with deep water, nearly two miles wide, flowing between it and the shore; while the shining speck on the seaward side stood out clearly as a low, white washed dwelling with a sturdy round tower at one end, crowned with a big eight-sided lantern— a solitary lighthouse.

That is the Isle of the Wise Virgin.

Behind it the long blue Laurentian Mountains, clothed with unbroken forest, rise in sembre ranges toward the Height of Land. In front of it the waters of the gulf heave and sparkle far away to where the dim peaks of St. Anne des Monts are traced along the Anne des alons are traced along the southern horizon. Sheltered a little, but not completely, by the island breakwater of granite, lies the rocky beach of Dead Men's Point, where an English navy was wrecked in a night of storm a hundred years ago.
There are a score of wooden houses

a tiny, weather beaten chapel, a Hud son Bay Company's store, a row of platforms for drying fish, and a varied assortment of boats and nets, strung along the beach now. Dead Men's Point has developed into a centre of industry, with a life, a tradition, social character of its own. And one of those houses, as you sit at the door in the lingering June twilight. door in the lingering June twilight, looking out across the deep channel to where the lantern of the tower is just beginning to glow with orange radiance above the shadow of the island-in that far away place, in that mystical hour, should hear the story of the light and its keeper.

When the lighthouse was built, many years ago, the island had another name It was called the Isle of Birds. Thou sands of sea fowl nested there. The people who lived on the shore robbed the nests and slaughtered the birds, with considerable profit. It was perceived in advance that the building of the lighthouse would interfere with this, and with other things Hence it was not altogether a popular improvement. Marcel Thibault, the oldest inhabitant, was the leader of the opposition.

'That lighthouse !" said he. " what good will it be for us? We know the weather, by day or by night. when the sky gets swampy, when it makes fog, then we stay with ourselves at home, or we run into La Trinité, or Pentecote. We know the way. What? The stranger boats? B'en! the stranger boats need not to come here, if they know not the way. The more fish, the more seals, the more every thing will there be left for us. Jus because of the stranger boats, to build something that makes all the birds wild and spoils the hunting—that is a fool's work. The good God makes no Isle of Birds. He saw no necessity of it.'

Besides," continued Thibault, puffing slowly at his pipe, "besides—those stranger boats, sometimes they are lost, they come ashore. It is sad But who get the things that are saved all sorts of things, good to put into our houses, good to eat, good to sell, some times a boat that can be patched up almost like new-who gets these things, eh? Doubtless those for whom the od God intended them. But who shall get them when this sacre light house is built, eh? Tell me that, you

Fortin represented the party of progress in the little parliament of the beach. He had come down from Ouebea He had come down from Quebec some years ago bringing with him a wife and two little daughters, and a good many new notions about life. He had good luck at the cod fishing, and built a house with windows at the side as well as in front. When his third girl. Nataline, was born, he went so far kitchen, and enclose a bit of ground for a yard. This marked him as a radical. an innovator. It was expected that he would defend the building of the lighthouse. And he did.

Monsieur Thibault," he said, "you talk well, but you talk too late. It is of a past age, your talk. A new time comes to the Cote Nord. We begin to civilize ourselves. To hold back against the light would be our shame. Tell me this. Marcel Thibault, what men are they that love darkness ?

"Torrieux!" growled Thibault, that is a little strong. You say my

No, no," answered Fortin: "I say not that, my friend, but I say this light house means good: good for us, and good for all who come to this coast. It will bring more trade to us. It will bring a boat with the mail, with newspapers, perhaps once, perhaps twice month, all through the summer. I will bring us into the great world. To lose that for the sake of a few birdspossible. The lighthouse is coming, certain." sera b'en de valeur! Besides, it is im

Fortin was right, of course. But Thibault's position was not altogether unnatural, nor unfamiliar. All over the world, for the past hundred years, people have been kicking against the sharpness of the pricks that drove them forward out of the old life, the wild life, the free life, grown dear to them because it was so easy. There

has been a terrible interference with bird nesting and other things. All over the world the great Something that bridges rivers, and tunnels moun tains, and fells forests, and populates deserts, and opens up the hidden cor-ners of the earth, has been pushing steadily on; and the people who like steadily on; and the people who like things to remain as they are have had to give up a great deal. There was no Point. The Isle of Birds lay in the of progress. The lighthouse

It was a very good house for that day. The keeper's dwelling had three rooms and was solidly built. The tower was thirty feet high. The lantern held a revolving light, with our-wick Fresnel lamp, burning sperm oil. There was one of Stevenson's new flame, and once every minute it was turned by clockwork, flashing a broad sea. All night long that big bright eye was opening and shutting. "Baguette!" said Thibault, "it winks like a one-eyed Windigo."

The Department of Marine and Fisher es sent down an expert from Quebec to keep the light in order and run it as his assistant. By the end of August he reported to headquariers that the light was all right, and that Fortin was qualified to be appointed keeper. Before October was out the certificate of appointment came back, and the expert packed his bag to go up the river.
"Now look here' Fortin," said he, "Now look here Fortin," said ne,
"this is no fishing trip. Do you think
you are up to this job?"
"I suppose," said Fortin.
"Well now, do you remember all this

business about the machinery that turns the lenses? That's the main thing. The bearings must be kept well oiled and the weight must never get out of order. The clock-face will tell you when it is running right. If anything gets hitched up here's the crank to keep it going until you can straighten the machine again. It's easy enough to it. Bit you must never let stop between dark and daylight. regular turn once a minute—that's the mark of this light. If it shines steady it might as well be out. Yes, better Any vessel coming along here in a dirty night and seeing a fixed light would take it for the Cap Loup-Marin and run ashore. This particular light has got to revolve once a minute every night m April 1 to December 10, certain

"Certain," said Fortin.
"That's the way I like to hear a ma talk! Now, you've got oil enough to last you through till the 10th of Decem-ber, when you close the light, and to run on for a month in the spring after you open again. The ice may be late in going out and perhaps the supply boat can't get down before the middle of April, or thereabouts. But she' bring plenty of oil when she comes, so you'll be all right."
"All right," said Fortin.
"Well, I've said it all, I guess. You

understand what you've got to do? Good-bye and good luck. You're the keeper of the light now. "Good-luck," said Fortin, "I an

The same day he shut up the red house on the beach and moved to the white house on the island with Marie Anne, his wife, and the three girl Alma, aged seventeen, Azilda, aged fifteen, and Nataline, aged thirteen. He was the captain, and Marie Anne was the mate, and the three girls were the crew. They were all as full of happy pride as if they had come into possession of a great fortune.

It was the 31st day of October. snow shower had silvered the island. The afternoon was clear and beautiful. As the sun sloped toward the rose colored hills of the mainland the whole family stood out in front of the lighthouse looking up at the tower.
"Regard him well, my children,

said Baptiste; "God has given him t us to keep, and to keep us. Thibaul says he is a Windigo. B'en! We shall see that he is a friendly Windigo. Every minute all the night he shall wink, just for kindness and good luck to all the world, till the daylight.

On the 9th of November, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Baptiste went into the tower to see that the clockwork was in order for the night. He set the dial on the machine, put a few drops of oil on the bearings of the cylinder, and started to wind up the weight.

It rose a few inches, gave a dull click and then stopped dead. He tugged a little harder, but it would not move Then he tried to let it down. pushed at the lever that set the clock work in motion.

He might as well have tried to make the island turn around by pushing at one of the little spruce trees that clung to the rock.

Then it dawned fearfully upon him

that some thing must be wrong. Trem-bling with auxiety, he climbed up and

peered in among the wheels.

The escapement wheel was cracked elean through, as if some one had struck it with the head of an axe, and one of the pallets of the spindle was stuck fast in the crack. He could knock it out easily enough, but when the crack came around again, the pallet would catch and the clock would stop once more

was a fatal injury. gripped his head in his hands, and lown the steps, out of the door, straight

to his canoe, which was pulled upon the western side of the island. "Dume!" he cried, "who has done this? Let me catch him! If that old

As he leaped down the rocky slope the setting sun gleamed straight in his eyes. It was poised like a ball of fire on the very edge of the mountains. Five minutes more and it would be gone. Fifteen minutes more and darkness would close in. Then the giant's eye must begin to glow, and to winl precisely once a minute all night long.

If not, what became of the keeper word, his faith, his honor? No matter how the injury to the clockwork was done. No matter who was to be blamed or punished for it.

That could wait. The question now whether the light would fail or not. And it must be answered within quarter of an hour.

That red ray of the vanishing sun was like a blow in the face to Baptiste. It stopped him short, dazed and be wildered. Then he came to himself, wheeled, and ran up the rocks faster than he had come down.
"Marie Anne! Alma!" he shouted.

as he dashed past the door of the house all of you! To me, in the tower!

came running in, full of curiosity, excited, asking twenty questions at once. Nataline climbed up the ladder and put her head through the trap door. "What is it?" she panted. "What has hap-"Go down," answered her father,

go down all at once. Wait for me. am coming. I will explain. The explanation was not altogother

id and scientias. There were some bad words mixed up with it. Baptiste was still hot with anger and the unsatisfied desire to whip somebody, he did not know whom, for something, he did not know whom, to be angry as

he was, he was still same enough to his mind hard and close to the main point. The crank must be adjusted the machine must be ready to turn be fore dark. While he worked he hastily made the situation clear to his listeners That crank must be turned by hand round and round all night, not too not too fast. The dial on the machine must mark time with the clock on the wall. The light must flash once every minute until daybreak. He would d

as much of the labor as he could, but the wife and the two older girls must help him. Nataline could go to bed. At this Nataline's short upper lip trembled. She rubbed her eyes the sleeve of her dress, and began to

weep silently.
"What is the matter with you? said her mother, "bad child, have fear to sleep alone? A big girl you!

"No," she sobbed, "I have no fear but I want some of the fun."

"Fun!" growled her father. "What fun? Nom d'un chien! She calls this He looked at her for a moment as she stood there, half defiant, half despondent, with her red mouth quivering and her big brown eyes sparkling fire; then he burst into a Come here, my little wild-cat,

said, drawing her to him and kissing her; "you are a good girl, after all. I suppose you think this light is part yours, eb?" The girl nodded.
"B'en! You shall have your share

fun and all. You shall make the tea for us and bring us something to eat. Perhaps when Alma and 'Zilda fatigue emselves they will permit a few turns Run now and boil the kettle."

Run now and boil the kettle."

how easily a handle turns, after a cer-tain number of revolutions there is a stiffness about it. The stiffness is not in the handle, but in the hand that pushes it.
Round and round, evenly, steadily,

minute after minute, hour after hour, shoving out, drawing in, circle after eircle, no swervirg, no stopping, no varying the motion, turn after turn— fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty seven—what's the use of counting? Watch the dial go to sleep—no! for God's sake, no sleep! But how hard it is to keep wake! How heavy the arm grows, how stiffly the muscles move, how the will creaks and groans. Batiscan! It s not easy for a human being to come part of a machine.

Fortin himself took the longest spell the crank, of course. He went to his work with a rigid courage. His shape that was like a bar of forged He meant to make that light resteel. volve if it killed him to do it. He was the captain of a company that had run into an ambuscade. He was going to fight his way through if he had to fight

The wife and the two older girls followed him blindly and bravely, in the habit of sheer obedience. They did not quite understand the meaning of the task, the honor of victory, the shame of defeat. But Fortin said it nust be done, and he knew best. they took their places in turn, as he gre w weary, and kept the light flash-

And Nataline-well, there is no way of describing what Nataline did, except to say that she played the fife. She felt the contest just as her father

did, not as deeply perhaps, but in the same spirit. She went into the fight with darkness like a little soldier. And she played the fife. When she came up from the kitchen

with the smoking pail of tea, she rapped on the door and called out to w whether the Windigo was at home

She ran in and out of the place like a equirrel. She looked up at the light and laughed. Then she ran in and reported. "He winks," she said, "old reported. ne eye winks beautifully. Keep him

My turn now !" She refused to be put off with a shorter spell than the other girls. "No," she cried, "I can do it as well as you. You think you are so much older. Well, what of that? The light is part mine; father said so. Let me

When the first glimmer of the little day came shivering along the eastern horizon, Nataline was at the crank. The mother and the two older girls were half asleep. Baptiste stepped out to look at the sky. "Come," he cried, returning. "We can stop now, it is growing grey in the east, almost

"But not yet," said Nataline; "we must wait for the first red. A few more turns. Let's finish it up with a

She shook her head and piped up the refrain of the old Canadian chanson:

And to that cheerful music the first night's battle was carried through to victory.

The next day Fortin spent two hours in trying to repair the clockwork. It

was of no use. The broken part was indispensable and could not

At roon he went over to the main land to tell of the disaster, and perhaps to find out if any hostile hand was re-spensible for it. He found out nothing. Every one denied all knowledge of the accident. Perhaps there was a flaw the wheel; perhaps it had broken i self. That was possible. Fortin could not dery it; but the thing that hur him most was that he got so little sympathy. Nobody seemed to care whether the light was kept burning or not. When he told them how machine had been turned all night by machine had been turned all night by hand, they were astonished. "Creie!" they cried, "you must have had a great misery to do that." But that he proposed to go on doing it for a month longer, until December 10th and to begin again on April 1st, and go on turning the light by hand for three or four weeks more until the supply boat came down and brought the necessary tools to repair the necessary tools to repair

yond their horizon.
"But you are crazy, Baptiste," they said, "you can never do it: you are not capable.

would be crazy," he answered. "if I did not see what I must do. light is my charge. In all the world there is nothing else so great as that for me and for my family—you under-stand? For us it is the chief thing. It is my Ten Commondments. I shall keep it or be damned."

There was a silence after this re-tark. They were not very particular nark. about the use of language at Dead Men's Point, but this shocked them a little. They thought that Fortin was wearing a shade too hard. In reality he was never more reverent, never more soberly in earnest. After a while he continued, "I want

some one to help me with the work on the island. We must be up all the nights now. By day we must get sleep. I want another man or a strong boy. Is there any who will come? The Government will pay. Or if not, I will pay, moi meme.'

was no response. All the men hung back. The lighthouse was still unpopular, or at least it was on trial. Fortin's pluck and resolution had undoubtedly impressed them a little But they still hesitated to commit themselves to his side.
"B'en," he said, there is no one.

Then He shall manage the affair en famille. Bou soir, messieurs! He walked down to the beach with

his head in the air, without looking back. But before he had his cance in the water he heard some one running down behind him. It was Thibault's youngost son, Marcel, a well-grown boy of sixteen, very much out of breath with running and shyness. "Monsieur Fortin," he stammered,

"will you-do you think-am I enough? Baptiste looked him in the face for a

moment. Then his eyes twinkled.
"'Cortain," he answered, "you are bigger than your father. But will he say to this?"

"He says," blurted out Marcel—
"well, he says that he will say nothing if I do not ask him.' So the little Marcel was enlisted

n the crew on the island. nights those six people—a man and a boy, and four women (Nataline was not going to submit to any distinctions on the score of age, you may be sure)—for a full month they turned their flashing lantern by hand from dusk to day-

The fog, the frost, the hail, the snow beleaguered their tower. Hunger and Cold, Sleeplessness and Weariness, Pain and Discouragement, held rendezvous in that dismal, cramped little room. Many a night, Nataline's fife of fun played a feeble, wheezy note. But it played. And the crank went round And every bit of glass in the lantern was as clear as polished crystal. And the big lamp was full of oil. great eye of the friendly gia the friendly giant winke

without ceasing, through flerce storm and placid moonlight. When the 10th of December came, the light went to sleep for the winter, and the keepers took their way across the ice to the mainland. They had won the battle, not only on the island, fighting against the elements, but also at Dead Men's Point, against public opinion. The inhabitants began understand that the lighthouse meant something-a law, an order, a prin-

Men cannot help feeling respect for

a thing when they see others willing to fight or to suffer for it. When the time arrived to kindle the light sgain in the spring, Fortin could have had anyone that he wanted to help him. But no; he chose the little Marcel again; the boy wanted to go, and he had earned the right. Besides he and Nataline had struck up a close friendship on the island, cemented during the winter by various hunting excursions after hares and ptarmigan. Marcel was a skilful setter of snares. But Nataline was not content until she had won consent to borrow her father's carabine. They hunted in partnership. One day they had shot a fox. That is, Nataline had shot it, though Marcel had seen it first and tracked it. Now they wanted to try for a seal on the point of the island when the ice went out. It was quite essential that Marcel should

"Besides," said Baptiste to his wife, confidentially, "a boy costs less than a man. Why should we waste money? Marcel is best."

A peasant-hero is seldom averse to conomy in small things, like money.

But there was not much play in the spring session with the light on the sland. It was a bitter job. December had been lamb like compared with April. First, the southeast wind kept the ice driving in along the shore. northwest wind came hurtling down wolves. There was a snow-storm of four days and nights that made the whole world — earth and sky and sea — look like a crazy white chaos. And through it all, that weary, dogged crank must be kept turning—turning from dark to day-

It seemed as if the supply-boat would

never come. At last they saw it, one fair afternoon, April 29th, creeping slowing down the coast. They were just getting ready for another night's

Fortin ran ont of the to ver, took off his hat, and began to say his prayers. The wife and the two elder girls stood in the kitchen door, crossing themselves, with tears in their eyes. Marcel and Nataline were coming up from the point of the island, where they had been watching for their seal. She was sing-

When she saw the hoat she stopped short for a minute.
"Well," she said, "they find us

awake, n'est c'pas? And if they don't come faster than that we'll have another chance to show them how we make the ight wink, eh ?' Then she went on with her song-

"Sautez, mignonne, Cecilia. Ah, ah, ah, ah. Cecilia!" ш.

funeral.

You did not suppose that was the end of the story, did you?

No, an out of doors story does not end like that, broken off in the middle, with a bit of a song. It goes on to something definite, like a wedding or a

You have not heard, yet, how near the light came to failing, and how the keeper saved it and something else too. Nataline's story is not told; it is only begun. This first part is only the introduction, just to let you see what kind of a girl she was, and how her life was made. If you want to hear the conclusion, we must hurry along a little faster or we shall never get to it.

Nataline grew up like a young birch ree-stately and strong, good to look She was beautiful in her place she fitted it exactly. Her bronzed face with an under-tinge of red; her black evebrows : her clear eves like the brown waters of a woodland stream her dark, curly hair with little tendrils always blowing loose around the pillar of her neck; her broad breast and sloping shoulders : her firm, fearless step : her voice, rich and vibrant; her straight, steady looks—but there, who can scribe a thing like that? I tell you

she was a girl to love out of-doors.

There was nothing that she could not do. She could cook; she could swing an axe; she could paddle a canoe; she could fish ; she could shoot ; and, best of all, she could run the light-house. Her father's devotion to it had gone into her blood. It was the There was nothing about it that she did not understand and love. From the 1st of April to the 10th of December the flashing of that light was like the beating of her heart—steady, even, un faltering. She kept time to it as un consciously as the tides follow

There were no more accidents to the clockwork after the first one was repared. It ran on regularly, year after

Alma and Azilda were married and went away to live, one on the South Shore, the other at Quebec. Nataline was her father's right hand man. As the rheumatism took hold of him and lamed his shoulders and wrists, more and more of the work fell upon her. She was proud of it.

At last it cane to pass, one day in January, that Baptiste died. He was not gathered to his fathers, for they were buried far away beside the Mont-morenci, and on the rocky coast of Brittany. But the men dug through the snow behind the tiny chapel at Deid Men's Point, and made a grave Baptiste Fortin, and the for Baptiste Fortin, and the young priest of the mission read the funeral

ervice over it. It went without saying that Nataline was to be the keeper of the light, at least until the supply boat came down came down again in the spring and orders arrives from the Government in She was a woman, is true. But if a woman can do a thing as well as a man, why should she Besides, Nataline could do this particular thing much better than any man on the Point. Everybody any man on the Point. Everybody approved of her as the heir of her father, especially young Marcel Thi-

What? Yes, of course. You could not help guessing it. He was Nataline's lover. They were to be married the next summer. They sat together in the best room, while the old mother was rocking to and fro and knitting beside the kit-chen store, and talked of what they were going to do. Once in a while when Nataline grieved for her father, she would let Marcel put his arm around her and comfort her in the way that lovers know. But their talk was mainly of the future, because they were young, and of the light, because Nataline's life belonged to it.

Perhaps the Government would re member that year when it was kept going by hand for two months, and give it to her to keep as long as she lived. That would be only fair. Certainly, it was hers for the present. No one had as good a right to it. She took possession without a doubt. At all events, while she was the keeper the light should not fail. But that winter was a bad one on the

North Shore, and particularly at Dead Men's Point. It was terribly bad. The summer before, the fishing had been almost a dead failure. In June a wild storm had smashed all the salmon nets and swept most of them away. In July they could find no caplin for bait for the cod fishing, and in August and September they could find no cod. The ew bushels of potatoes that some of the inhabitants had planted, rotted in the ground. The people at the Point went into the winter short of money and very

There were some supplies at the store, pork and flour and molasses, and they could run through the year on credit and pay their debts the following summer if the fish came back. But this resource also failed them. In the last week of January the store caught fire and burned up. Nothing was saved. and burned up. Nothing was saved. The only hope now was the seal-hunting in February and March and April. That at least would bring them meat said one; "take it in your hands thi

and oil enough to keep them from star-

But this hope failed, too. The winds blew strong from the north and west, driving the ice far out into the gulf. The chase was long and perilous. eals were few and wild. dozen were killed in all. By the last week in March Dead Men's Point stood

face to face with famine.

Then it was that old Thibault had an

idea.
"There is sperm oil on the Island of Birds," said he, "in the lighthouse plenty of it, gallons of it. It is not very good to taste, perhaps, but of that? It will keep life in the body. The Esquimaux drink it in the north. We must take the oil of the often. lighthouse to keep us from starving until the supply-boat comes down.

"But how shall we get it?" asked the others. "It is locked up. Nata-line Fortin has the key. Will she give

it?" "Give it?" growled Thibault. "Name of a name! of course she give it. She must. Is not a life, life of all of us, more than a light?"

A self-appointed committee of three, with Thibault at the head, waited upon Nataline without delay, told her their plan, and asked for the key. She thought it over silently for a few min-

utes, and then refused point blank.
"No," she said, "I will not give
the key. That oil is for the lamp. It you take it, the lamp will not be lighted on the 1st April; it will not be burn ing when the supply-boat comes. For me, that would be shame, disgrace, worse that death. I am the keeper of the light. You shall not have

They argued with her, pleaded with her, tried to browbeat her. She was a rock. Her round under jaw was set like a steel trap. Her lips straightened nto a white line. Her eyebrows drew

together, and her eyes grew black.
"No," she cried, "I tell you no, no, thousand times no. All in this house I will share with you. But not one drop of what belongs to the Later in the afternoon the priest

came to see her; a thin, pale young man, bent with the hardships of his life, with sad dreams in his sunken eye He talked with her very gently and kindly. "Think well, my daughter; think seriously what you do. Is it not our first duty to save human life ? Surely

that must be according to the God. Will you refuse to obey it? Nataline was trembling a little now. Her brows were unlocked. The tears stood in her eyes and ran down her cheeks. She was twisting her hands

together. My Father," she answered, "I desire to do the will of God. But how shall I know it? Is it not His first command that we should love and serve Him faithfully in the duty which He has given us? He gave me this light to keep. My father kept it. He is dead. If I am unfaithful what will he ay to me? Besides, the supply boat is coming soon-I have thought of -when it comes it will bring food, lost. That would be the punishment for my sins. No, mon pere, we must trust God. He will keep the people.

will keep the light.' The priest looked at her long and steadily. A glow came into his face. He put his hand on her shoulder. "You shall follow your conscience," he said quietly. "Peace be with you, Nata-

That evening just at dark Marcel came. She let him take her in his arms and kissher. She felt like a little child, tired and weak.

"Well," he whispered, "you have done bravely, sweetheart. You were right not to give the key. That would have been a shame to you. But it is all settled now. They will have the oil without your fault. To night they are going out to the lighthouse to break To night they in and take what they want. She straightened in his arms as if an

electric shock had passed through her. She sprang back, blazing with anger. "What?" she cried, "me a thief by round about-with my hand behind my back and my eyes Do you think I care only for the blame I tell you that is nothing. My light shall not be robbed, never, never!" She came close to him and took him by the shoulders. Their eyes were on

a level. He was a strong man, but she was the stronger then. "Marcel Thibault," she said, "do you love me? " My faith," he gasped, " I do. You

know I do. "Then listen," she continued; "this is what you are going to do. You are going down to the shore at once to make ready the big cance. I am going to get food enough to last us for the month. It will be a hard pinch, but it will do. Then we are going out to the island to-night, in less than an hour. Day after to morrow is the 1st April. we shall light the lantern, and it Then we shall light the lantern, and it shall burn every night until the boat comes down. You hear? Now go:

and be quick : and bring your gun. IV.

They pushed off in the black dark ness, among the fragments of ice that lay along the shore. They crossed the strait in silence, and hid their canoe among the rocks on the island. They carried their stuff up to the house and locked it in the kitchen. Then they unlocked the tower, and went in, Marcel with his shot gun, and Nataline with her father's old carabine. fastened the door again, and bolted it, and sat down in the dark to wait.

Presently they heard the grating of the prow of the barge on the stones below, the steps of men stumbling up the steep path, and voices mingled in contused and voices mingled in confused talk. The glimmer of a couple of lanterns went bobbing in and out among the rocks and bushes. There was a little crowd of eight or ten mer, and they came on carelessly, chattering and laughing. Three of them carried axes,

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