THE REDS OF THE MIDI

BY FELIX GRAS

1841-1901

A CLASSIC IN A PAGE

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There is nothing more dramatic in history than the march of the Reds of the Midi from Marseilles to Paris at the time when the French Revolution would have failed had not that battalion arrived as it did. The men of the Marseillais battalion had sworn to "cast down the tyrant"—that poor, weak king, who was no tyrant—only an expert locksmith who would have been content to continue "filing his locks and his keys" while the nation went to smash. To the Reds of the Midi the revolution was not what it was to the Reds of Paris. It was a rising of the starving peasants. They thought when they left Marseilles that Paris was just across the mountains. But once having arrived in the French capital they knew their power. The story of Felix Gras is one of those historical novels which tell more of history than history itself, because it introduces us to the thought and feeling not only of Paris, but of France, at the time when the House of Bourbon fell and the head of a king was flung, as a gage of defiance, into the face of the nations of Europe.

STATELY and grand was the Chateau de la Garde, seat of the Marquis d'Ambrun, and miserable were the huts and hard was the lot of his peasants. Pascalet was 12 years old before he saw either a kneading trough, bread hutch, oil jar or wine keg, things possessed nowadays the poorest peasant in Provence—that delightful southland of France. In the single room of his father's hut were two boxes filled with straw, which served as beds, the cooking pot in the middle of the room, hanging from a roof beam, and a big chopping block. That was all the furniture of the place he called home. Pascalet, his father and his mother lived in this hut, which stood close to the great chateau, because they belonged, along with the other farm animals, to the estate of La Garde.

Pascal gathered the acorns on the estate, and for his pay was allowed to keep half of them. Also he had the right to till two small pieces of land, from which he got enough beans, vetches and herbs to keep his family from actually starving to death—his wife, called La Patin, his boy and all their fleas. Once a year the family baked bread, making it out of a coarse sort of flour composed of rye, beans and acorns ground together, husks and all, the collections and savings of the year. Each morning the father with his ax would cut upon the chopping block the daily allowance of bread for the family, and by the end of the year the bread was so hard that it dulled the edge of the ax.

The family of the Marquis d'Ambrun consisted of his wife, the marquise, their son Robert (Count Robert, who, though only a boy, was a Cavalier du Roi), and a daughter, Adeline, a fair and gentle creature, who was of the same age as Pascalet. The first piece of white bread Pascalet ever saw was given him by Adeline as he passed one day before the great chateau.

The marquise, who saw the act, called out to her daughter: "Adeline, Adeline, what do you mean by giving your bread to that little wretch? You must not teach him what white bread is or the day may come when he will snatch it out of your mouth." And then to Pascalet: "Get out of here, you little beast. Get out, hurry—or I will set the dogs on you." The piece of white bread was the most delicious thing Pascalet had ever eaten in all his life; yet the cruel words of the great lady made it bitter as gall. Nevertheless, from that hour, all his life long, he thought of Adeline as an angel. Once the boy was coming home from a hunt for magpies' nests, and, as he had eaten nothing all day, hunger was twisting his insides. As he passed behind the chateau, skirting the stables, he saw in the gutter a fine cabbage stalk, which made his mouth water and he ran to pick it up.

But the marquis's sow, with her litter, also saw it and ran to dispute the prize with him. The swineherd, a brutal fellow, gave Pascalet such a blow with his stick as knocked him breathless, while the marquis, who was looking out of a window, called: "Well done! well done. What is that little rascal doing there, trying to steal the food out of the mouths of my pigs? Vermin—these peasants. If they could but get at us, would eat us alive."

When Monsieur le Marquis, Madame la Marquise and Monsieur Robert one day chanced to pass by the hut of old Pascal the man and his wife went down on their knees and so remained until the great people had gone on. At the sight Pascalet was devoured by shame. He did not kneel at all and it hurt him to keep back his rage. "You wretched boy," said his father, "the next time I'll take good care that you kneel to our kind master"—and to see how simple and good his father was made Pascalet rage inwardly still more against the marquis and the system. Of all those living in the chateau Adeline was the only one whom Pascalet could meet without a feeling of anger. To meet her was a pleasure, and he always saluted her with respect and delight. She had gentle eyes and she smiled upon him whenever she saw him. But as she grew older, he fancied that, little by little, her smiles grew fainter, and, though he knew her eyes were just as gentle, he did not dare look upon her any more.

Such was the condition of things on the estate of La Garde in Provence while a revolution had broken out in Paris and the throne of the Bourbons was tottering to its fall. Rumors came that in Avignon people were killing each other, and it was said that the Marquis and M. Robert were going to Paris to fight for the king, who was in great danger.

One cold, winter day Pascalet and his father were gathering acorns among the pebbles in the bed of a dry stream when a hare came running by followed by dogs, and after the dogs came M. Robert, Cavalier du Roi. Pascalet was about to throw a stone at the hare when she saw him and doubled, leaping over the dry stream-bed and whisking off into the thick woods on the other side, where she was safe. M. Robert came up in a fury, shouting out to old Pascal, who had not seen a thing of the occurrence, so intent was he with his sluggish wits in gathering the acorns, "You dirty beast of a peasant, I'll teach you to spoil my hunting!" The feeble old man fell upon his knees before his master's son and M. Robert rained blow after blow upon the peasant with his dogwhip. The gamekeeper ran up, a huge German fellow who, because they could not pronounce his name, the folk about there called Surto, and also began to hammer poor Pascal. Pascalet had climbed up on to a high rock for safety, but when he saw them so beating his father he grabbed a great stone and hurled it through the air so that it just grazed the gamekeeper's ear and landed on the toes of M. Robert. "Ale!" yelled the young Count, and, wheeling, he saw Pascalet. Off went both barrels of his gun and the shot whizzed around the boy, who, plunging down the ravine, ran for his life and hid himself in the depths of the wood.

There he remained, half frozen and half starved, thinking of his hard lot and afraid to go home. At length so miserable was he that the thought occurred to him that it would be a good and comfortable thing to be dead. There was a lake below him, and going down to its edge he leaped as far out into the lake as he could spring. Was Pascalet drowned? Not a bit of it—if he had been this history would not have been written. But he was horribly shaken up. The pond was frozen thick, and the boy came down with a bump which jarred the ice and himself, but effected no serious damage on either.

After his disappointment in his endeavor to commit suicide, the little fellow concluded that, after all, he had best go home, and so he stole through the night and the cold to the hut perched high up on the hill of La Garde. He found it deserted—no mother, no father, no fire! In despair he thought of the priest, M. Randoulet, who was kind to all, was the real father of his flock, peasant or aristocrat, and he made his way to the village. He knocked at the priest's door. The good priest took the little fellow in, and, for the first time in his life, Pascalet slept on a real bed.

In the morning M. Randoulet gave Pascalet an outfit of clothes in elegance beyond anything the boy had ever dreamed of wearing, and took him to the hospital, where old Pascal was lying, dangerously ill from the blows he had received from M. Robert and the gamekeeper. By the bedside of the father was watching the faithful mother. Sad as the situation was, the joy of Pascalet was great at seeing his parents again, though his heart rebelled and a bitter feeling filled his breast when the old man said that as soon as he was well enough he would go to M. le Marquis and M. Robert and beg their pardons on his knees. "For what?" thought Pascalet. "For being starved and beaten almost to death?"

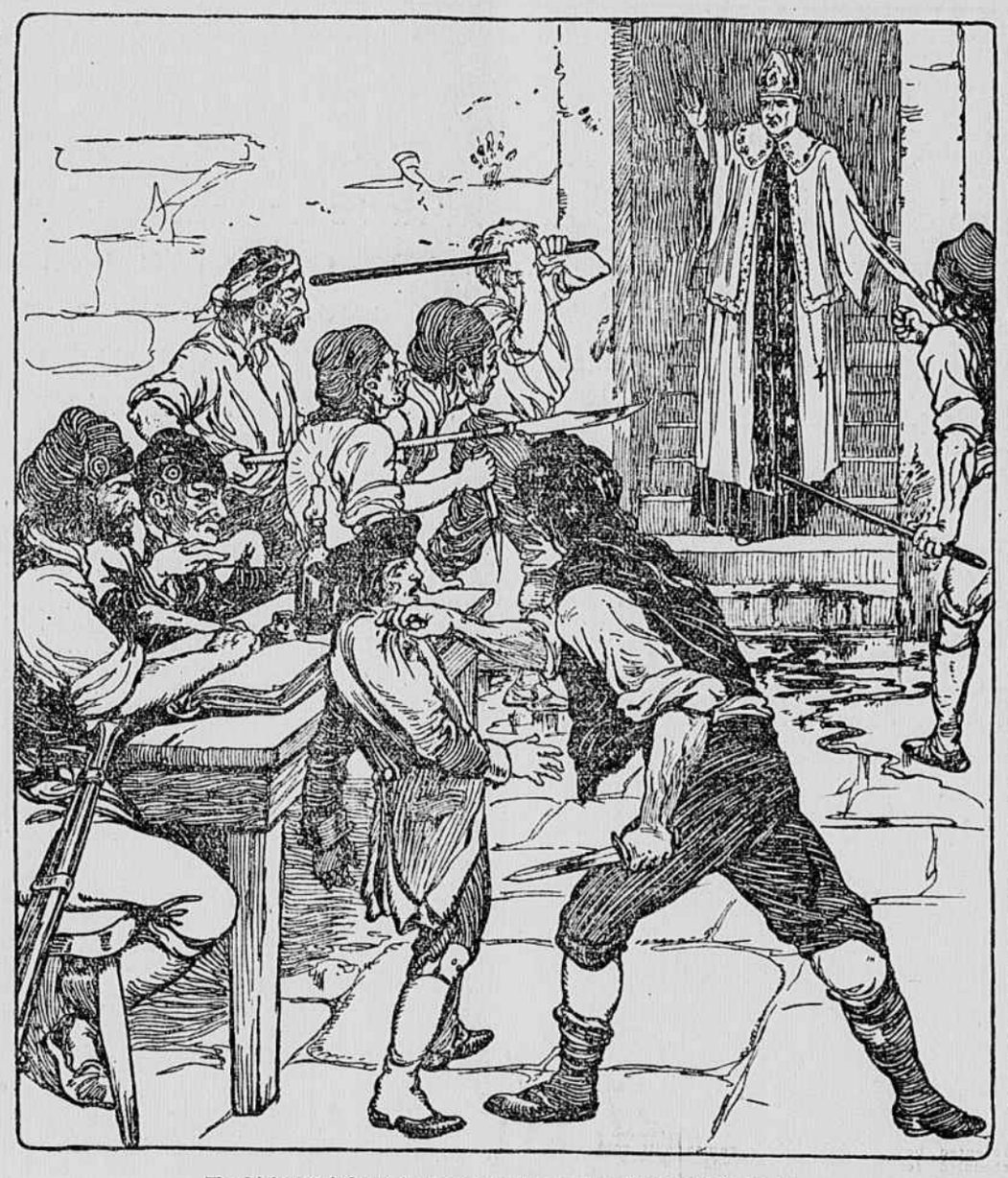
While the boy was in the hospital a new terror came to him. A band of people disguised as White Penitents—those who go about burying the dead of the poor—broke into the place and stabbed to death a number of men who lay there recovering from wounds received in a fight between the supporters of the old regime and those who espoused the cause of the new revolution. Among the leaders of the assassins was Surto, and, seeing Pascalet, he seized him and bore him away toward the chateau with the intention of killing him.

And Surto had very good cause to wish Pascalet dead. Once, not long before, the boy had climbed into a tree and was concealed there when there strolled along and stopped to talk beneath his hiding place the Marquise d'Ambrun and Surto. Much of what they said Pascalet could not understand, but he comprehended enough to know that the marquise and the gamekeeper designed to kill the marquis and Count Robert—that the marquise was infatuated with Surto. When they had passed on Pascalet had dropped from the tree and run home, but he had been seen by the guilty pair, and his death had been resolved upon; they knew he must have heard a part at least of their conspiracy. But Surto did not kill Pascalet when he took him from the hospital. The boy, wily, supple, sinewy, swift of foot as a hare, managed to escape from the gamekeeper's hold and ran for safety again into the depths of the forest.

Once more, when the pursuit was over, did Pascalet seek out the good M. Randoulet and the priest, knowing that the boy's life was not safe while he remained in the neighborhood, sent him to Avignon, giving him a letter to the Canon Jusserand, a high ecclesiast of that city. The boy, whose vision had never before ranged beyond his native hills and dales, was filled with wonder at the stately city which, after a wearisome journey on foot, he finally reached—the city of Avignon.

Still more was he astonished at the conditions he found there. The people seemed all beside themselves. There were the constant rolling of drums and the rush of groups of dancers treading the wild, revolutionary dance of the farandole or indulging in the wilder gyrations of the carmagnol. Hither and thither went marching men clad in the uniform of the National Guard, while the air reverberated by day and night with shouts of "Vive la nation!"

Pascalet as he entered the city was carried away by the general frenzy and found himself wildly dancing a farandole down the streets to the sound of fifes and drums, buzzing tambourines and squealing pipes. There, in a line with barefooted ruffians, were well dressed citizens, each with his watch on. There were soldiers and washerwomen, huckesters in their Catalan caps dancing with ladies in lace dresses and dandies clad in silk. And there seemed to be no end to that farandole. Only now and then exhaustion made some drop out of the wild dance. There were commissioners, as they called them, of the revolutionary government, who made speeches to the crowd, and rations of bread, olives and filberts were served out to the people. Pascalet worked his way out of the press and made



The bishop cried out in a commanding voice: "I knew this boy!"

for the great steps leading up to the old palace of the popes.

There were many people sitting there eating their rations, and among them a soldier of the National Guard with his wife and little boy. They made room for Pascalet, and soon he was friends with the whole family. The soldier was Vauclair, a joiner, and his wife was Lazuli, their little boy Clairette. They learned Pascalet's story from him, took him home, treated him as a child of their own and Vauclair enlisted him in the National Guard—little as Pascalet was. His letter to the Canon Jusserad he never delivered. He tried to, but when he went to the house of the Canon wearing his uniform of the National Guard he was driven from the street—which was a street of "aristos."

And now the Marseillais battalion arrived, passing through Avignon on its way to Paris. The battalion was 500 strong, and in the van marched a big fellow carrying a banner on which was inscribed "The Rights of Man." Whenever he saw a person who looked as if he might be an aristocrat the big fellow stopped and made the suspect kneel down and kiss the banner of "The Rights of Man."

If the town had been excited before the arrival of the Marseillais battalion it was now thrown into a state of frenzy. The men of the battalion brought with them a new song, the words of which stirred the hearts of the Reds, and for the first time Pascalet heard that song to the music of which he was afterward to march across Europe, to traverse the sands of Egypt and tread the shores of Acre—the immortal "Marseillaise." Many recruits the battalion gathered in Avignon, and among others Lazuli marched away to Paris "to call the King to accounting."

Pascalet did not march with the battalion of the Reds of the Midi. He wanted to, but circumstances prevented. As the boy went wandering and wondering about the streets of the city on the day before the Reds were to start for Paris he was seized by that black-visaged gamekeeper, Surto. Pascalet was without arms, Surto had come to Avignon with his master and the family, stopping there for a day or so on the way to Paris, where M. Robert, the Cavalier du Roi, was to defend the King.

Poor little Pascalet, in spite of his bravado, was taken to the house where the family of his owners was stopping and placed by Surto in a dark and damp dungeon, far beneath the foundations. There, he was informed by his jailer, he was to stay until he starved to death. The rats ran about him, the air was heavy with the deadness of ages and the peasant boy gave up all thought of life, trying to prepare himself for death. No sound came to him in his dark and foul cell. But he summoned up visions of angels and of that life beyond the grave where all that is wrong in this life will be set right. As he mused upon this amid darkness and terror he thought of angels and light. Then there came to him a vision. A young girl, holding above her head a lighted candle, came down the slimy steps of the dungeon. It was Adeline, his good angel. "Here," said she, "are the keys. I have stolen them from that wicked Surto. Go free yourself. They have sworn your death. Fly while there is yet time." Then she vanished, and Pascalet, taking the great keys, climbed from the darkness up to the outer world and was again in the streets of Avignon, with the stars shining overhead and the flush of the early dawn beginning to tint the eastern skies.

After one great, refreshing draught of fresh air, he hurried to the house of Vauclair. Lazuli received the boy as one returned from the dead, but listened with little interest to his raptures regarding the young angel who had liberated him from his dungeon. The good woman, instead, hurried from off after the Marseillais battalion. It was only a day's march in advance and by rapid work he might join it. And Pascalet was to take this message to Vauclair—that Lazuli and the little boy, Clairette, would join him in Paris, going by the diligence. So Pascalet finally came up with the battalion of the Reds of the Midi and with them journeyed through a country which was torn by the civil war which, begun in the capital, had spread its discord of blood and strife into the most remote villages of France. But, whenever the way seemed long and whenever the populace seemed hostile, the big fellow with the banner of "The Rights of Man" would give a flourish to it and the battalion would break out into the song which made all ways smooth for the people and all ways of death and destruction for their oppressors. Hill and dale of the pleasant land of France rang to the sound of Rouget de Lisle's new song:

Allons! enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé.

At a little town, before they saw the lights and heard the hum of the big city, the diligence from Avignon caught up with the battalion, and Pascalet, for one hour, was in the company of the kind of people who had taken him under their protection. As they all were eating in the inn, Lazuli remarked that she had fears for the safety of the girl, an "Aristo," she feared, who was a fellow passenger with her in the diligence. This girl was a sweet-faced, delicate being, who was being taken up to Paris by one of the most ferocious and disreputable women of Avignon, La Jacaresse, whose business was that of the slaughter of pigs. From the description of the girl given by Lazuli, Pascalet knew that the captive of La Jacaresse was Adeline. The boy opened his heart to his good friends and Lazuli promised that she would rescue the girl. "The poor lamb," said this woman of the people; "the poor lamb will not be sacrificed if I can help it—and I think I can." Lazuli was a resolute woman and she did save the life of Adeline. Even the conductor of the diligence was won over to the side of a suspected "Aristo" by the gentleness of Adeline, and, by his connivance, as soon as the carriage stopped at a posting-house in the capital, he took La Jacaresse out for a drink, while Lazuli ran from the coach with her boy and Adeline.

She took them to the house of a carpenter, a man with whom Vauclair had served his apprenticeship, one Planchet, who was just then doing a flourishing business as a maker of guillotines. Wise in her generation and feeling that she should, in a measure, dissemble, even to the carpenter, Lazuli introduced Adeline as her daughter. There were few beds in the house of the carpenter and so he took up a box which he had made to fill his order for guillotines—a box with two posts standing up from it—posts with grooves in them, and assigned this as a bed for Adeline. Lazuli did not dare tell the carpenter that the little girl she represented as her own child was in reality an aristocrat. Planchet would rather have died, or caused somebody else to die, than have one of the hated "Aristos" in his house. So when Vauclair and the Marseillais battalion arrived and husband and wife embraced in the home of the revolutionary carpenter, Lazuli warned her husband against betraying the identity of Adeline. As for Pascalet, he had grown so old and wise on his trip with the Reds of the Midi that he saw the situation at once and—held his tongue. The carpenter, however, when he saw how Adeline and Pascalet embraced and kissed each other, declared that the daughter of his friend Vauclair and this adopted son of his were sure to marry in the future, and thought that they would suit each other perfectly.

As soon as the Marseillais battalion arrived in Paris, they were for at once storming the King's castle and dictating terms to him. But the Paris revolutionists were having a sane spell after their frenzy, and Santerre, the brewer, who was playing fast and loose with both sides, advocated a waiting policy. The Reds of the Midi were indignant. Had they marched all the weary leagues which lay between Provence and Paris to remain inactive, listening to the sound and fury of the speeches of the Jacobins? But the carpenter kept on making his guillotines and pressed Vauclair into service to help him. He had an order for seventy of them, and they were to be ready by a certain date. "Where are those guillotines?" asked Vauclair, and the carpenter looked at him with a serious face, but without explaining. The knives had not been placed in them yet—these knives that were to sever the heads of the noblest in France from their bodies and the head from the body politic.

Pascalet climbed up on the two arms which extended from the improvised bed of Adeline, and wrote in pencil above, on the crossbeam, the word "Adeline." Little did he guess when and where he would again see that written name upon the guillotine.

At last, one day when the Reds of the Midi were weary of waiting their peak-marked officer, Margan stood up in the gallery of the Assembly, the members of which were chattering as usual, and cried out: "You are all afraid! You sit there shaking like reeds. You are always afraid that something will happen or will not happen. And while you chatter we, the Reds of the Midi, wait. We have tramped through the heat of the sun and the chill of the night to come here and finish your business, and you have allowed us only enough moldy bread to keep us from starvation. We would accomplish that for which we came and go back to the Midi. We think you are cowards. But, as for us, all we fear is your fear. If we leave you to accomplish the revolution there will be no revolution."

But this speech did no good; the sections of Paris were still afraid. Then Barbareaux and Danton came to the rescue. They talked with the Federals from Brest and with those of the National Guard, who were really intent upon destroying the monarchy. The Reds of the Midi were removed to new barracks across the Seine, to the building which had been the convent of the Cordeliers—where the Patriot Club used to meet—and Danton himself came to them and served out cartridges with his own hand. And as he served out the cartridges he shouted "Liberty, Fraternity and Equality—or death." This was the sort of talk the Reds of the Midi liked, and their hearts were still further rejoiced when Barbareaux promised them that on the morrow they should storm the proud castle of Louis.

And so the longed-for day came and, while the tocsin sounded and the people of Paris aroused themselves at the noise of drums, singing "Ca Fra," the Marseillais battalion made its way to the Tuilleries and gave heart to the other revolutionaries who had swarmed about this palace of the Bourbon kings. Then did the walls of that palace echo to the singing of the "Marseillaise" and the ancient dynasty of Capet was overthrown.

As Pascalet was busy in the attack upon the King's castle, he looked up at a window and saw M. Robert firing upon the people below as rapidly as the could with guns which were loaded and handed to him by a huge, black-looking man behind him. This man was Surto, and even as Pascalet stood looking he saw Surto place a pistol behind the ear of his master's son and shoot him dead. M. Robert fell, hanging half out of the window, and not long afterward Pascalet saw Surto wearing the uniform of the National Guard and mingling with the patriots. Pascalet saw that Surto was carrying out his design and feared for the safety of Adeline. The girl, all the while, had been asking for her mother, her father and her brother. She wanted to be taken to them. After the assault upon the King's palace matters went on quietly for a while, Capet and his wife were prisoners and the National Assembly began to get uneasy at the presence of the Marseillais battalion in the capital. It was resolved to pay them off and send them home.

Then the time for truth telling came, and on the eve of pay day a whispered consultation was held in Plancho's shop, and it was decided that Vauclair and Pascalet were to get their money, while the women told Adeline the truth and persuaded her that the best thing for her was to get back to Avignon with Lazuli. Early the next morning Pascalet left the house of the carpenter—he wanted to be away when Adeline's cry of pain should ring out as she was told of the death of Robert and of the real situation in which she stood. Pascalet was at the barracks before Vauclair, and the rising sun was just beginning to gild the eaves of the houses when he met with a half dozen of his fellow Reds of the Midi going to get their pay. "Hurry up, kid; go and get your pay and then come with us; we are off for a good time. We mean to see some of the sights of this big village; come on." And so Pascalet joined them, after he had received his pay, and from one cabaret to another they went, arm in arm, and taking up the whole width of the street. Since the tenth of August, when the Marseillais battalion had led the attack upon the king's castle, the people of Paris gave way when they saw a man clad in the uniform of the Reds of the Midi. Finally the whole company concluded that it was time to seek the repose of the barracks. "Look here," cried one of Pascalet's companions, pointing to a lantern and staggering a little as he spoke, "there are the barracks."

They headed for the lantern and as they came to the building heard a most infernal racket inside. As soon as they entered they saw it was not the barracks which they had struck, but a place where men and women of gentle blood were coming down a flight of stairs to have their brains beaten out by a gang of ruffians who stood waiting for them. There was a table at the foot of the stairs, and three judges, drunk with sleep and brandy, were waiting there and merely taking down the names of those who were delivered to the slaughter. A half-burned-out candle stuck in a bottle cast a fitful light over the scene. This place into which the three Reds of the Midi had stumbled in their drunkenness was the prison of the Abbey and the three judges who sat at the foot of the stairs were simply sans culottes with red caps on. While Pascalet and his friends stood watching and astonished, there came down the stairway a man as pale as death. "Has he refused the oath?" cried the three self-constituted judges, and as rapidly they cried out, "He has!" In an instant two or three iron bars struck him down and pikes and swords were thrust into his body. He was dead. Then two sans culottes dragged out his lifeless body and threw it into a cart waiting outside.

Pascalet's companions fled from the horror of the scene, but the boy stood spellbound by the horror of the thing. He was so sobered by the shock that he forced his way through the press and approached the foot of the stairway just as a form he well knew, that of Marquis d'Ambrun, came down. The poor old marquis was nearly dead with terror, but as he approached the table of the judges his eyes lighted up with a new hope and he cried out: "Oh, Surto; you here? You will save me!" But as he spoke Pascalet saw the great arms of the gamekeeper wield aloft an iron bar and the marquis fell dead at the feet of his vassal. Pascalet could stand it no longer and broke out into passionate denunciation of the gamekeeper, whereupon he was seized by a couple of sans culottes and dragged before the judges. He had on, it is true, the uniform of the soldiers of the Marseillais battalion, but Surto, recognizing the boy, cried out: "He is an Aristo; let me at him with my iron bar!" Just at that moment there came on the stairs, slowly and in a dignified manner, a tall, pale man, dressed in the garb of a high ecclesiast. Pascalet was about to fall beneath the blows of the iron bars, when the bishop cried out in a commanding tone: "I know this boy, I myself saw him marching with the Marseillais battalion as it came up to Paris. I am about to meet my Maker and would speak only the truth." The bishop fell beneath the iron bars; the horrified Pascalet was released and wandered forth into the night.

He looked down and saw that his feet were red to the ankles with blood. He realized that he was drunk and that his companions had deserted him. He felt in his pockets, and found they were empty. The money that Vauclair had loaned him he had squandered, as well as the money which he had received as one of the Marseillais battalion. What a sin had he committed? Gluttony and drunkenness had done for him. And there was the pure and white Adeline, who would be waiting his return home. He looked around. The gutter beside him was running with blood—the blood of the unhappy wretches who were being killed in the big building which he had just left. Very carefully he stepped over the little red stream which was flowing to the river of the Seine. He only had to follow it and he would reach that river.

The old thought came over him which he had in the frozen woods of La Garde—he would commit suicide! But at that moment he heard the rattle of drums. Off on the other side of the river, in front of what had been the king's castle, the drums were beating just as they did on the morning when the Reds of the Midi had stormed it. What did it mean? Was the king come back? Could that roll of drums be for the assembly of the Marseillais battalion? Whatever it meant, the sound of the "tambours" put new life into Pascalet and instead of jumping into the river, as he had intended, he followed the sound of the drums.

When Pascalet came to the front of the castle he found a platform set up upon which were three patriots crying out: "The country is in danger; who will enlist? Here is your pay for a month." Then the patriot said something else about the armies of foreigners who were marching to sack Paris and put the king on his throne again. Pascalet saw the means of making himself square with Vauclair, and, before he realized it, he was enlisted and was enrolled in a regiment which was to march to the frontier the next morning. The patriot who enrolled him, said: "Stop, citizen; surely I know you—you lodge with Planchet. Here are your three crowns. You live at the lodge with the maker of guillotines." "Yes," answered Pascalet, "and please take these three crowns to Vauclair, who also lodges there. As for me, I am off with the regiment."

Thinking always of the fair Adeline, Pascalet marched away to the frontier. The pigeons were fluttering on the eaves of the ruined king's castle in the bright sunshine as Pascalet marched away next morning. The drums were rattling a lively quickstep.

When he saw Paris again it was the sixteenth of Fructidor in the year II. The battle of Valmy and all the borders of the Rhine had been fought. That sixteenth Fructidor, when Pascalet returned to Paris, he was stationed with his company as guard in front of a guillotine in the Place de la Revolution. The "national knife" was descending to chop off the heads of the aristocrats. He saw two old people dragged forward. They were the old Marquis d'Ambrun and the Marquise, his wife. For all their crimes he wanted to come to their rescue, but he looked up and saw written on the crossplece of the instrument of death the word "Adeline." The Marquise looked up as she fell on her knees and saw the name written on the crossbeam. Then a third person was dragged to the falling knife. He was a big fellow and he struggled and fought as he was dragged to his doom. It was Surto, but his head went into the basket just the same.

Three times the knife fell and three times heads fell into the basket—heads with eyelids still fluttering and with jaws still working, that bit the bloody sawdust as they fell.

But other drums than those of the Terror were sounding and new regions were to be conquered by France "drunk with blood." Things moved too rapidly for Pascalet to get an opportunity to see again his dear southland, but one day, it was in the Thermidor of the year IV., as he, weary with fighting, having just finished his share in the killing of fifteen thousand Mamelukes, was sitting at the foot of the great Pyramid of Cheops, a man came to him and said: "If I am not wrong, comrade, you are Pascalet, the son of La Patinget, and I'd know you anyway by the way you speak, as from Provence." It was a man whom Pascalet had seen before, but had not known intimately, but he ventured to ask the question: "Do you know whatever became of Mademoiselle Adeline, the daughter of the Marquis d'Ambrun?" "Oh, yes," replied the soldier. "She died last year. I am only a recruit. She was an Ursuline nun and died because she was in love with somebody who left her to go off to the wars. But she became a nun and died as one. But, tell me, comrade, did you ever know a man named Vauclair, who lived in Avignon?" Pascalet did not answer. And in a few moments the trumpets called together the adventurous army, which General Bonaparte had taken to look in the face of the Sphinx.

Read "IF THE SEA COULD TELL" in The Times-Dispatch Magazine