

LITTLE FRANCE

A ROMANCE OF THE DAYS WHEN "THE GREAT LORD HAWKE" WAS KING OF THE SEA

BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

Author of "Commodore Paul Jones," "Reuben James," "For the Freedom of the Sea," etc.

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CHAPTER XIII—(Continued.)

"Be seated, mademoiselle. Let us withdraw, gentlemen, and consider this communication for a moment," said the governor, after reflecting deeply for a short time.

The Chevalier de Ramesay and his officers stepped to the other end of the apartment and intently consulted together, leaving Anne standing near de Vitre and his guards.

"O mademoiselle," cried de Vitre to her, addressing her despite the presence of the soldiers, "this is a public place in which to address you, but I stand in the shadow of death and I must needs take any opportunity which fate provides me. You have long known of my devotion to you. I have not disguised it nor do I wish to make further protestations to you. I only want to thank you, as a man dying, for the brave stand you have taken in attempting to save not only my life, but what is dearer to me—my honor. Thank Capt. Grafton, too, for his good words, though I feel they will be useless. The evidence against me is strong. This cursed uniform is the last straw. Rankling under the defeat of the morning, and with the certainty of surrender before them, they are too bitter to weigh well what they are doing. They want a scapegoat, and here is one ready to hand. Mademoiselle, one last favor. It means but little perhaps to you but much to me. I cannot go to you. Will you not reach hither your hand?"

"They must not kill you, Monsieur de Vitre! 'Tis most unjust!" cried the girl piteously, stepping over to him. "As for my hand—" She stretched it out, and, though he was bound and tied, nothing could have exceeded the courtesy grace with which he bent over it and pressed a long kiss upon it. She held it tightly against his lips.

"There is my hand, monsieur!" she exclaimed, as the soldiers withdrew a little, out of consideration for her evident grief. "I would that my heart went with it."

"Monsieur de Vitre, mademoiselle," said the governor, returning to his seat, "we have carefully considered the testimony of Mademoiselle de Rohan and are of the opinion that it is not sufficiently important to cause to delay the execution. I fear that a few days may see the English in possession of the town, and that, of course, means that you, sir, would escape all punishment. As for the testimony of the English officer, he is in honor bound to extricate his ally from his predicament, and we question—"

"Who questions the word of Capt. Philip Grafton?" cried a stern voice, as a strangely-ill-assorted pair entered the hall. One of the two was a small slender man, only partially clothed, whose face was ghastly pale and who held his left hand pressed against his right shoulder. He would have fallen to the floor but that he was supported by the encircling arm of a huge old man in the livery of the Rohans. The two were Philip and Jean-Renaud.

"Grafton!" cried de Vitre. "Thank God, you have come!"

"Jean-Renaud," exclaimed Anne, "how dared you to bring this gentleman here! Against the doctor's orders and mine! His life—"

"Peace, mademoiselle!" interrupted Grafton. "I came here because I feared what has happened, that they would not accept your testimony. Your servant but obeyed my orders, he had no choice!"

"But your life, monsieur!" said Anne.

"I peril it gladly to save the honor of a brave gentleman, though an enemy. Monsieur le Gouverneur, you are about to execute this gentleman?"

"There was a dead silence in the room.

"It is true," answered Mademoiselle de Rohan.

"It must not go on!" cried Grafton. "I swear to you on my honor as an English gentleman that Monsieur de Vitre is innocent! He is no traitor; on the contrary, he deserves your highest commendation. He refused to pilot



PRESSED A LONG KISS UPON IT.

the ships in, even though, by the orders of the admiral, he was placed on the rail of the ship with a rope flung around his neck, and men awaited the signal to hang him."

Murmurs rose from the officers in the hall.

"Why was he not hanged, then, Sir Englishman?" asked the governor. "Because an English officer interfered, one who hated to see a brave man sacrificed, and through his influence the general, who was his friend, and the admiral, who is his captain, he saved Monsieur de Vitre's life."

"Do you know this to be a fact, monsieur?"

"I do, monsieur."

"Who was the officer that saved his life?"

"The truth in the answer was patent in every line of the blood-stained figure. There was a burst of applause from the officers in the room as his words carried conviction to their hearts."

"Who piloted the ships, then?"

"Some fishermen, and some of us came up the river without a pilot."

"But this uniform?"

"I have no doubt that Monsieur de Vitre can explain that. I know that last night he was held a close prisoner on the Sutherland."

"Monsieur, forgive the question. I wish to be quite certain. You are not saying this to save an ally?"

"Sir, I have given you my word of honor, the word of an officer of the king. As God is my judge, I have told the truth! Hold Monsieur de Vitre until you can communicate with Admiral Saunders or Gen. Townsend. Send out a special flag now, and if the facts be not as I have stated I will answer for them with my own life. You hold me prisoner, sir. I am alone in your power. I would stake anything upon de Vitre's honor. Indeed—he turned pale and caught at his breast again where the red stains showed under his hand—"I believe that I have staked my life for—"

He stopped, his glance wavered toward Anne.

"For you—your lover—mademoiselle!"

He swayed back and forth and fell heavily to the floor at her feet.

"Release Monsieur de Vitre!" cried de Ramesay.

Anne de Rohan instantly sank to the floor and knelt by the prostrate form of the English captain.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" she cried. "He is dying!"

There was a look on her face, in her eyes, for which de Vitre would have given all he possessed. As the soldiers unbound him, he sprang to her side.

"You love him!" he cried. "You love him!"

CHAPTER XV.

"THOU SHALT NOT COVET."

ANNE DE ROHAN had admitted to herself as she had watched Grafton before he recovered consciousness that she loved him. If there had been any doubt in her mind of the permanence of her feelings of bygone days and their development from the childish devotion to the deep passionate love which filled her soul, the tell-tale kiss she had pressed upon his forehead when she thought him dying would have undeceived her. And she realized it more entirely at that moment when she saw him lying white and still at her feet in the hall. That something of her feeling had expressed itself in her looks she did not doubt.

But it is one thing to admit a fact in the secret recesses of one's own consciousness, or even to look one's feelings, and another to have it proclaimed on the housetops. She bitterly resented de Vitre's impulsive allegation, and that it was true but enhanced her indignation against him, and against herself. How could she, a de Rohan, love this commoner of America? How could she, a French woman, bestow her affection upon an enemy? How could she give her heart to a man who wore another woman's picture above his own? Everything stood in the way of any future relationship whatever between them.

And yet how magnificently he had come to the rescue of de Vitre! How nobly he had stood forth in the hall a moment since! O God, it was true! She had betrayed herself; the world would know that she had given away her love to this English officer—an enemy. She felt and saw the pointing fingers of her society; she heard the words "Traitor! Traitor!" in the air. She would not, she could not!

Yet, how he had looked at her when he clutched her dress with that fevered question, "Are you in love with Monsieur de Vitre?" She was afraid of herself. If he should recognize her and plead with her could she resist him? No, she feared not, she was sure she could not. She loved him too well to do so. Of that point she was absolutely certain, and of another fact consequent upon the first, as well. She did not love Denis de Vitre. She admired him—but love, no. And yet here was a safeguard. Betrothed to him she could better struggle against the pleadings of her heart. She did not yet realize what her long dormant feelings toward Philip would be, or how powerful a hold he was to have upon her.

"Monsieur de Vitre," she exclaimed, clearly enough to be heard by all the room, "you forget yourself! How could I love this stranger, an enemy of France? You are not yourself; these

trials have bewildered you, and I have but one answer to your charge. You have asked me again and again to—to—in short, monsieur, are you still—"Mademoiselle de Rohan!" cried de Vitre, clasping her hand, "is it—will you—"

"Monsieur, I esteem you. I regard you, I admire you. I am willing, with the consent of my grandfather the marquis—to be—"

"Monsieur de Ramesay," cried de Vitre, turning to the little group, who had been regarding the couple intently, "Mademoiselle de Rohan makes me the happiest of men! She deigns to honor me by promising me her hand."

"Look to your English friend, Monsieur de Vitre," promptly answered the governor, "and quickly!"

"Maledictions upon me!" cried de Vitre, kneeling beside the two servants. "A surgeon, quick!"

The physician, who had been previously summoned, was speedily forthcoming, and under his ministrations the flow of blood was stanching and Grafton presently opened his eyes again.

"My friend," cried de Vitre, as Grafton recovered consciousness, "what can I say? What can I do to repay you? On the ship yonder you saved my life. A moment since, in this hall, you saved my honor, and I believe it is to you I owe my greatest happiness."

"And what is that?" whispered Grafton.

"Mademoiselle has consented to do me the honor of becoming my wife."

"Ah!" exclaimed Grafton, as if stricken again.

"What is it, what is it?" cried the Frenchman, "what can I do?"

"You might have let me die, de Vitre. But there, 'tis nothing. Take me hence."

"Where will you be taken, monsieur?" asked the governor.

"He shall go back to my house," interrupted Anne, "whence he came. And you, Monsieur de Vitre, will accompany—"

"Your pardon, mademoiselle," said de Ramesay, "I believe Monsieur de Vitre to be innocent of all the charges that have been made against him, but my duty compels me to detain him in the castle until I can communicate with the English. One of my aides will accompany you home."

"Tis useless, sir. I have here a faithful guard. If you will have some of your soldiers bring a litter to carry Monsieur Grafton, it will be enough."

"Watch over him well, mademoiselle!" cried de Vitre, as the soldiers bore him from the room. "I owe him much—everything!"

"Trust me, monsieur," replied the young girl, "Monsieur le Gouverneur, Lieutenant de Vitre, gentlemen, I bid you adieu!"

With a sweeping courtesy she left the room.

Attended by Josette and guarded by Jean-Renaud, with brimming eyes and a leaden heart in her bosom, she walked by the litter as the soldiers bore it through the street. With downcast head she moved, yet no movement of her wounded charge escaped her. Grafton lay on the stretcher with his eyes closed. Once, as the bearers stumbled, he opened them with a sharp exclamation of pain. Instantly she bent over him. As her gaze fell upon his face he slowly turned his head away, as if the sight were too much for him and he could not bear to look upon her.

"Are you in pain, monsieur?"

"Ah, Mademoiselle de Couedic!" he answered, "such pain as I trust you may never know."

"Why did you turn your head from me?"

"Mademoiselle," he answered softly, still not looking at her, "I am thinking of some pregnant words in an old book which I had read to me when I was a child."

CHAPTER XVI.

RECOGNITION.

GRAFTON still lay on the great bed in the upper chamber, although it was the evening after the day of the battle and the visit to the chateau. He had been promptly put there again by the faithful Jean-Renaud when his bearers had reached the house, and after a quiet night and a long day of perfect rest he felt much better. Dr. Arnoux, who had called to see him in the morning, had reproached him severely for his excursion of the day before. Although the surgeon had been filled with generous admiration at the devotion and courage Grafton had exhibited in behalf of de Vitre in the chateau, he had strictly forbidden him to rise again from the bed for some time at least. With the remembrance of his unfortunate collapse in the chateau at the trial of de Vitre, the Englishman was inclined to heed his advice. Indeed, he could do no less, since his uniform, as a further preventive, had been taken away by Jean-Renaud under the orders of Mademoiselle de Rohan.

The tedium of the day had been relieved by two short visits from the mistress of the household. Had she consulted her inclination only, she would not have left him for a moment, but she did not dare trust herself long in his presence. Yet bare

hospitality, the consideration due a sick man whom fate had thrown upon her hands, constrained her at least to inquire as to his health and to supervise in person the meager arrangements which the straitened circumstances necessitated by the rigorous siege of Quebec permitted her to make for his comfort.

Her visits had been brief, however, and while they lasted she had deliberately stood in the shadow of the bed-curtains, so that no opportunity for a fair look upon her face had been vouchsafed him—a thing he was thirsting for and yet which he felt utterly unable to bring about. Indeed, his thoughts had been so busy with her personality and her image, that the time, which might have dragged as only time can linger, leaden-footed in the sick chamber, had passed before he noticed it.

Yet he was very dissatisfied with the situation. There was something about the young demoiselle which moved him powerfully, something he could not explain. The thought of her betrothal to de Vitre filled him with a certain jealous dismay—he could not exactly tell why. It was hardly possible he could be in love with her himself, a girl he had seen but a day since! He seemed to have known, or to have met her before, though. How was it? De Couedic! And yet—

But what could he do? Nothing. He was master of himself now—in the full possession of his faculties, with no excuse of weakness, wounds, or fever, that is—and there could be no possible reason for so personal an appeal to her as he had made when in fevered confusion he had asked her if she loved de Vitre.

During the day he was attended by a strange servant, and saw neither Jean-Renaud nor Josette, either of whom might have enlightened him had not both been kept from him by the orders of their mistress. The conversation between the two, therefore, on the occasion of these two visits was necessarily brief; confined on her part to inquiries as to his well-being, his needs, and desires, and upon his part to expressions of gratitude for her kindness, and earnest deprecations of the trouble he was giving her and her household.

As for her, every time she approached him she longed to declare herself. With the passionate abandon of a French woman who loved literally for the first time, who found herself in the actual presence of a long-cherished ideal, before a realization of her girlish and maidenly dreams, she would fain have thrown herself upon his breast—into his arms. She longed to gather him to her heart and lavish upon him those treasures of affection which all the gallantry, courage and devotion of de Vitre could not evoke. And all this in the face of the keen jealousy she suffered over the locket he wore, and the resentment she felt, in despite of the precautions she took to prevent it, that he had not recognized her—which was unreasonable but essentially feminine.

But she had controlled herself like an American. The marquis himself could not have been more coolly and coldly polite than she. As for Grafton, he had not yet, to use his own expression, "got his bearings." Never in his life had he been so moved by the presence of a woman as during the last two days. He could hardly reason about it clearly in his present condition. But at last he thought that the explanation of this infatuation must lie in his weakness and her beauty, for with singular faculty he had not succeeded in discovering any other reason for his interest.

In the first place, owing to the precautions she had taken, he had not yet had that clear, full sight of the girl for which he longed. She had always been in a half light, or concealed in some shadow, or with face turned away, when she had been with him. He might have looked upon her carefully in the hall of the Chateau St. Louis, but his mind was bent upon other things then, and his physical weakness and the resulting collapse had possibly impaired his judgment as well as his vision.

Among the many she had met who had paid court to her, the man she most liked, and who was, in fact, perhaps the finest among them, was the young sailor to whom, in fear of her love for Grafton, she had just engaged herself. She had refused his suit many times before, but with undaunted gallantry he had persisted in his attentions.

How her grandfather, the marquis, would regard the engagement upon which she had so suddenly and capriciously entered was problematical. In fact, she felt that he would disapprove; but while she was wholly French in her training and in her ideas she was not for nothing the daughter of an American mother. She combined a determination to exercise a certain liberty of choice as to the disposition of her heart and person with the stubborn, inflexible will power of her grandfather. Therefore, she could meet the certain antagonism of the marquis with two weapons—his own and her mother's. She trusted also that he might be won to her view; she was sure he would rather see her dead than have her marry an Englishman, an enemy, and she hoped, when she explained to him that in utter despair she had thrown herself into the arms of the one to escape the promptings of her heart, which would fain have thrown her into the arms of the other, that he would acquiesce.

She had no one to advise her, poor child! The ancient relative to whose care she had been committed, had died a few weeks since of the cares, anxieties and privations brought about by the siege. An ordinary French girl would have gone to a convent under the circumstances, but Anne possessed a certain amount of self-reliance and independence, and she resolved, for the time being, at least, to remain at

very deeply upon Grafton's consciousness when he had been held a prisoner at the chateau, and the changed uniform and dress, together with the lapse of time, had prevented his being recognized. Anne had been very careful not to call the names of her two servants in his presence after she had recognized him, and during the day he had not seen either of them. Luck, too, was against him. Indeed, how could he have recognized in this glorious specimen of glowing womanhood, the thin, undeveloped little girl of other days?

Anne de Rohan was now 18 years of age and in the first flush of beautiful womanhood. Of medium height, with a figure which combined the lovely proportions of her American ancestry with the daintiness and delicacy of the women of France; with a clear, cool, pale yet not pallid face, exquisite features, scarlet lips, proudly, as even disdainfully elegant in their graceful curves; deep blue eyes, so deep that they were almost violet when filled with feeling or glowing with passion, and the whole framed in her midnight hair; she was indeed a rarely beautiful woman. The performance of her maturity was indeed greater than her childhood's promise had been. Only a prophet might have seen the one in the past, or a seer recognize the other in the present.

A strange concatenation of circumstances had brought the girl to New France. After Grafton's departure from the chateau de Josselin she had drooped and faded. She was growing too rapidly, thought the marquis and those who advised him, who never suspected the real reason for her ill health. She actually had pined for the young man who had left her behind and yet had taken her childish heart with him. But of this, of course, she said nothing, so the wise men concluded that she had studied too hard, had been too closely confined, and so on. The physicians who were consulted, after the simple remedies of the time had proved unavailing, finally recommended a sea-voyage.

As it happened, the marquis had just then been summoned to the King to take part as a commander in one of the campaigns of the Seven Years' war, his experience and ability being too valuable to allow him to be neglected. The old man, therefore, had taken advantage of the departure of a heavy French squadron, carrying general, the Marquis de Montcalm, his suite, and some troops, to send his grand-daughter to Canada under the charge of the general, an old friend, who had been appointed to the supreme command in New France. An ancient relative of the house of Rohan lived in affluence and ease in Quebec, and to her the marquis consigned the young countess.

She had remained in New France with this estimable lady ever since her arrival, for two reasons: One, it had been difficult—well-nigh impossible, indeed, on account of the number of English ships cruising to intercept the traffic between Canada and France—to get away; and the other, as the marquis was still engaged in the French army, she would have no place to which to go, no place where she could have lived so comfortably and safely if she returned to France. The marquis was determined that he would not throw her into the hotbed of dissipation and intrigue of which Louis XV. was the focus, in Paris or at Versailles.

Her health, much benefited by the voyage, was soon completely restored, and with her great beauty, her ancient name, her powerful grandfather, the great estates to which she was sole heiress, she became, as childhood gave way to womanhood, the undoubted belle of New France. The officers of the army, the sea officers from the various ships or squadrons which from time to time arrived from France, the young Canadian noblesse, all laid their hearts at her feet. She could have chosen any one from among them, but as yet none of them had succeeded in touching her heart. Most of them she liked and the society of many of them she enjoyed.

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SCHOOL

Begins Next Monday

The Boy's Wardrobe, perhaps, needs a little attention. Whatever his needs may be, we are well equipped to supply them. Our wear-resisting School Suits are worthy of your inspection. These comprise all the new things in Cassimeres, Fancy Worsteds and Scotch Tweeds. You'll find here an endless variety at

\$1.50, \$2.00, \$3.50 and \$4.00.

Just received—50 dozen Boys' Knee Pants in Corduroys and Fancy Cassimeres. They're priced at

50c, 75c and \$1.00.

We've just what you want in Boy's Waists and Shirts. We'd like to show them to you.

PEACH & CRESSWELL,

Sellers of Xtragood Clothes for Boys.

her own house with old Jean Renaud and Josette. If the English were driven away she made up her mind that at any hazard she would take ship for France. If, on the contrary, the English captured the town she would probably be sent back a prisoner. So she awaited the issue of the campaign, in the meantime busying herself with caring for the sick and wounded.

It was evening. She stood by the dormer window looking out on the street. Grafton watched her closely from the bed. She had stopped a moment to inquire for him, her third and to be her last visit that day, and then, attracted by a commotion outside, she had gone to the window.

A little cortege filled the street below. Some soldiers bore upon their shoulders a rude wooden box. Over it was laid the golden-lilied white flag of France, and upon the flag a handsome sword. A half-dozen men, holding pine torches whose flickering, wavering flames cast an uncertain illumination over the scene, walked by the makeshift coffin. Immediately behind came a few priests, and then Monsieur de Ramesay and his staff, and a little huddle of townspeople—the idle and the curious.

There were no strains of martial music; there was neither blare of bugle nor roll of drum, nor tolling bells. There was no ceremony, no pomp; there were no women even.

Anne leaned her head upon the casement, her tears falling softly. Her body shook with sobs. Grafton stared at her keenly and curiously. There was a strange pain at his heart when he saw her weep.

Presently the funeral procession passed the window. The lights from the torches, almost at a level with her face in the window of the low-studded old house, threw it into high and bright relief. She was off her guard, not thinking of herself or even of Grafton, for the moment. It was the first time that he had been able to see her well. Suggestions of the truth came across him with a sense of shock, and yet he did not quite recognize her. He was not sure. It could not be.

(Continued in next issue.)

AMADOR.

Amador, Aug. 31.—Marion Smith and family spent Sunday at Clyde Smith's.

F. L. Baekus spent Sunday in Davis county at the Fred Bachman home.

Roy Smith and wife and John Chapman and wife, of Ottumwa, were guests at John Smith's Sunday.

Steve Myers spent a few days last week in Blakesburg.

Alice Roush visited Clara Berry recently.

Born, to Mr. and Mrs. George Myers, a son.

Irma Day returned last week from Cantril, where she had been visiting her sister.

George and Minnie Phillips entertained their friends at an ice cream social recently.

Clara and Opal Berry gave an ice cream social last week in honor of Alice Roush, of Browning.

Harry, the little son of Mr. and Mrs. Pete Schwartz, is recovering from a slight illness.

iting her sister, returned Tuesday to her home at Browning, Mo.

Bert Williams and family and Alice Roush visited near Blakesburg Sunday.

C. W. Bachman and wife returned recently from a visit in Kansas City.

Mrs. Alex. Mabry and Miss Ruth Kirkart departed last week for a sojourn in Kansas and other points.

Mrs. Edna Myers called on Mrs. Laura Baker recently.

Mrs. James Smith, who has been quite ill, is somewhat improved.

Tom Tadlock and Mrs. Susan Kent visited at Ira Haning's one evening last week.

Mrs. Rhoda Smith returned recently from a visit in Drakeville.

Will Kent and Tom Tadlock called at the Williams home Friday evening.

Mrs. Winnie Schwartz has been ill for several weeks.

John McFarland and family spent Sunday at the E. Myers home.

The little child of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Renfrew has been dangerously ill the past week.

HAZEL DELL.

Hazel Dell, Aug. 31.—G. W. Workman and wife, of South Ottumwa, visited Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Workman.

Miss Winnie Hartley is visiting with friends and relatives in Ottumwa this week.

O. G. Truitt and family attended the Old Settlers' reunion at Drakeville Saturday. The reunion was gotten up almost entirely by E. Truitt, of Drakeville, and was a grand success in every way. There were some very good speakers both in the morning and afternoon. Among them were Rev. Ireland, of Drakeville, Hon. W. H. Taylor, of Bloomfield, Rev. Wickizer of Bloomfield, Col. S. A. Moore of Bloomfield, Mr. Mabry of Abia, and Mrs. Wickizer of Bloomfield. There was an unusually large attendance and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. The Florida band furnished music for the day. The gentlemen and lady who had resided in the county the greatest number of years received a rocking chair. The recipients were Mrs. Dodd and Mr. Veir.

Last week tent meetings were conducted at Mars Hill by Rev. Pike and Rev. Pickens. There were ten conversions and six accessions to the church during these meetings. A basket meeting was held Sunday which was largely attended.

MAPLE GROVE.