

LAZARRE

By MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD

(Based Upon the Mystery Surrounding the Fate of the Dauphin, Son of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette)

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50 Per Cent of the Cotton Brought to the Summer Market is Bought By the

Levi Bros.

WHY?

Because we are in touch with those who make advance contracts, and who are able to put us in position to pay more for cotton than any other buyers in our city.

But our cotton business is only an addition to our GENERAL MERCANTILE Business. We have by our diligence made ourselves leaders in trade, not by waiting for trade to come to us, but by our reaching out and coming in touch with the farmers of the country, and selling them Goods as cheap as the lowest, and giving to them for their products as much or more than the highest.

These are facts that have been demonstrated by our continued increase of business.

We want our friends to come to Sumter and look through our immense stock of

Dry Goods, Dress Goods, Fancy Goods and Notions, Clothing, Shoes, Hats and the best line of Plantation and Family Groceries in the City.

To meet the demands of our trade everything is bought by us from first hands, and our patrons get the profit which other dealers must pay middlemen. We can and will save you money, both in what you buy of us, and what we buy of you. Come to see us.

LEVI BROS.

Next To Court House.

SKIN DISEASES THE OUTCROPPING OF BAD BLOOD

And while not always painful are aggravating beyond expression. With few exceptions they are worse in spring and summer when the system begins to thaw out and the skin is reacting and making extra efforts to throw off the poisons that have accumulated during the winter. Then boils and pimples, rashes and eruptions of every conceivable kind make their appearance, and Eczema and Tetter—the twin terrors of skin diseases—Nettle-rash, Poison Oak and Ivy, and such other skin troubles as usually remain quiet during cold weather, break out afresh to torment and distract by their fearful burning, itching and stinging. A course of S. S. S. will purify and enrich the blood, reinforce and tone up the general system and stimulate the sluggish circulation, thus warding off the diseases common to spring and summer. The skin, with good blood to nourish it, remains smooth and soft and free of all disfiguring eruptions.

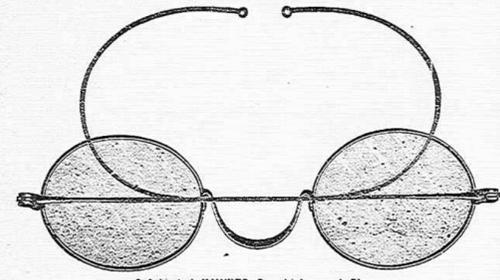
Send for our free book on diseases of the skin and write us if you desire medical advice or any special information. This will cost you nothing.

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Look to Your Interest.

Here we are, still in the lead, and why suffer with your eyes when you can be suited with a pair of Spectacles with so little trouble? We carry the



Celebrated HAWKES Spectacles and Glasses, Which we are offering very cheap, from 25c to \$2.50 and Gold Frames at \$3 to \$5. Call and be suited.

W. M. BRÖCKINTON.

Just Received A Lot Of

BUGGIES, WAGONS, HARNESS

AT Competing Prices.

COFFEY & RIGBY.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BLACKNESS surrounded the post carriage in which I awoke, and it seemed to start in a tunnel that was a few feet from the end. Two huge trees, branches and all, were burning on a big hearth, stones glowing under them, and figures with long beards in black robes passed between me and the fire, stirring a caldron. If ever witches' brewing was seen it looked like that.

The last eclipse of mind had come upon me without any rending and tearing in the head, and facts returned clearly and directly. I saw the black robed figures were Jews cooking supper at a large fireplace, and we had driven upon the brick floor of a post house which had a door nearly the size of a gable. At that end stood a ghostly form of open land, forest and sky. I lay stretched upon cushions as well as the vehicle would permit, and was aware by a shadow which came between me and the Jews that Skenedonk stood at the step.

"What are you about?" I spoke, with a rush of chagrin, sitting up. "Are we on the road to Paris?"

"Yes," he answered.

"You have made a mistake, Skenedonk."

"No mistake," he maintained. "Wait until I bring you some supper. After supper we can talk."

"Bring the supper at once then, for I am going to talk now."

"Are you quite awake?"

"Quite awake. How long did it last this time?"

"Two days."

"We are not two days' journey out of Mittau?"

"Yes."

"Well, when you have horses put in tomorrow morning turn them back to Mittau."

Skenedonk went to the gigantic hearth, and one of the Jews led him out a bowlful of the caldron stew, which he brought to me.

The stuff was not offensive, and I was hungry. He brought another bowlful for himself, and we ate as we had often done in the woods. The fire shone on his bald pate and gave out the liquid lights of his fawn eyes.

"I have made a fool of myself in Mittau, Skenedonk."

"Why do you want to go back?"

"Because I am not going to be thrown out of the palace without a hearing."

"What is the use?" said Skenedonk. "The old fat chief will not let you stay. He doesn't want to hear you talk. He wants to be king himself."

"Did you see me sprawling on the floor like the idiot?"

"Not like the idiot. Your face was down."

"Did you see the duchess?"

"Yes."

"What did she do?"

"Nothing. She leaned on the women, and they took her away."

"Tell me all you saw."

"When you went in to hold council, I watched and saw a priest and Belleguer and the boy that God had touched all go in after you. So I knew the council would be had for you, Lazarre, and I stood by the door with my knife in my hand. When the talk had gone on awhile I heard something like the dropping of a buck on the ground and sprang in, and the men drew their swords and the women screamed. The priest pointed at you and said, 'God has smitten the pretender.' Then they all went out of the room except the priest, and we opened your collar. I told him you had fallen like that before and the stroke passed off in sleep. He said your carriage waited, and if I valued your safety I would put you in it and take you out of Russia. He called servants to help me carry you. I thought about your jewels, but some durns began to beat and I thought about your life."

"But, Skenedonk, didn't my sister—the lady I led by the hand, you remember—speak to me again, or look at me, or try to revive me?"

"No. She went away with the women carrying her."

"She believed in me—at first! Before I said a word she knew me! She wouldn't leave me merely because her uncle and a priest thought me an impostor! She is the tenderest creature on earth, Skenedonk—she is more like a saint than a woman!"

"Some saints on the altar are blind and deaf," observed the Oneida. "I think she was sick."

"I have nearly killed her! And I have been tumbled out of Mittau as a pretender!"

"You are here. Get some men to fight, and we will go back."

"What a stroke—to lose my senses at the moment I needed them most!"

"You kept your scalp."

"And not much else. No! If you refuse to follow me, and wait here at this post house, I am going back to Mittau!"

"I go where you go," said Skenedonk. "But best go to sleep now."

I took my fists in my hands and swore to force recognition if I battered at lifelines on Mittau.

At daylight our post horses were put to the chaise, and I gave the postilion orders myself. The little fellow bowed himself nearly double and said that troops were moving behind us to join the allied forces against Napoleon.

"Very well," I said. "Take the road

westward. We were dogged. A bridge broke under us. We dodged Austrian troops. It seemed even then a fated thing that a Frenchman should retreat ignominiously from Russia.

However, I knew my friend the marquis expected me to return defeated. He gave me my opportunity as a child is indulged with a dangerous plaything—to teach it caution.

He would be in his chateau of Plessy, cutting off two days' posting to Paris. And after the first sharp pang of chagrin and shame at losing the fortune he had placed in my hands, I looked forward with impatience to our meeting.

"We have nothing, Skenedonk," I exclaimed the first time there was occasion for money on the road. "How have you been able to post? The money and the jewel case are gone?"

"We have two bags of money and the snuffbox," said the Oneida. "I hid them in the post carriage."

"But I had the key of the jewel case."

"You are a good sleeper," responded Skenedonk.

I blessed him heartily for his forethought, and he said if he had known I was a fool he would not have told me we carried the jewel case into Russia.

I dared not let myself think of Mittau. The plan of buying back her estates, which I had nurtured in the bottom of my heart, was now more remote than America.

One bag of coin was spent in Paris, but three remained there with Dr. Chantry. We had money, though the more valuable treasure stayed in Mittau.

In the sloping hills and green vines of Champagne we were no longer harassed dodging troops and slept the last night of our posting at Epervier. Taking the road early next morning, I began to watch for Plessy too soon without forecasting that I was not to set foot within its walls.

We came within the marquis' boundaries upon a little goose girl knitting beside her doer. Her bright hair was bound with a woolen cap. Delicious grass and the shadow of an oak under which she stood were not to be resisted, so I sent the carriage on. She looked open-mouthed after Skenedonk and bobbed her dutiful, frightened courtesy at me.

The marquis' peasants were by no means under the influence of the empire, as I knew from observing the lad whom he had sought among the drowned in the mortuary chapel of the Hotel Dieu and who was afterward found in a remote spot seeing signs of life. The goose girl dared not speak to me unless I required it of her, and the unusual notice was an honor she would have avoided.

"What do you do here?" I inquired.

Her little heart palpitated in the answer, "Oh, guard the geese."

"Is the Marquis du Plessy at the chateau?"

Her face grew shaded, as a cloud chased sunlight before it across a meadow. "Do you mean the new marquis, the old marquis' cousin, monsieur? He went away directly after the burial."

"What burial?"

"The old marquis' burial. That was before St. John's day."

"Be careful what you say, my child."

"Didn't you know he was dead, monsieur?"

"I have been on a journey. Was his death sudden?"

"He was killed in a duel in Paris."

"It can't be true!"

"Monsieur, the goose girl asserted solemnly, "it is true. The blessed St. Alpin, my patron, forget me if I tell you a lie."

Around the shadowed spot where I sat I heard traces whispering on the hills and a cart rumber along the hardened dust of the road.

"Monsieur," spoke the goose girl out of her good heart, "if you want to go to his chapel I will show you the path."

She carried her knitting down a valley to a stream, across the bridge and near an opening in the bushes at the foot of a hill.

"Go all to the right, monsieur," she said, "and you will come to the chapel where the Du Plessys are buried."

Keeping all to the right, as the goose girl directed, I found a chapel like a shrine.

It was locked. Through the latticed door I could see an altar, whereunder the last Du Plessy who had come to rest there doubtless lay with his kin.

The light, quick stepping of horses and their rattling harness brought Mme. de Ferrier's carriage quickly around the curve fronting the chapel. Her presence was the one touch which the place lacked, and I forgot grief, shame, impatience at being found out in my trouble, and stood at her step with my hat in my hand.

She said, "Oh, Lazarre!" and Paul beat on Ernestine's knee, echoing, "Oh, Zar!" and my comfort was absolute as release from pain, because she had come to visit her old friend the marquis.

I helped her down and stood with her at the latticed door.

"How bright it is here!" said Eagle.

"It is very bright. I came up the hill from a dark place."

"Did the news of his death meet you on the post road?"

"It met me at the foot of this hill. The goose girl told me."

"Oh, you have been hurt!" she said, looking at me. "Your face is all seamed. Don't tell me about Mittau today. Paul and I are taking possession of the estates!"

"Napoleon has given them back to you!"

"Yes, he has! I begged the De Chamaunts to let me come alone. By hard posting we reached Mont-Louis last night. You are the only person in France to whom I would give that vacant seat in the carriage today."

I cared no longer for my own loss, as I am afraid has been too much my way through life, or whether I was a prince or not. Little paradise after death, as so many of our best days come, this perfect day was given me by the marquis himself. Eagle's summer dress touched me, and Paul and Ernestine sat facing us, and Paul ate cherries from a little basket and had his fingers wiped, beating the cushion with his heels in excess of impatience to begin again.

We paused at a turn of the height before descending, where fields could be seen stretching to the horizon, woods fair and clean as parks, without

the wildness of the American forest, and vineyards of bushy vines that bore the small black grapes. Eagle showed me the far boundaries of Paul's estates.

Best of all was coming to the chateau when the sun was about an hour high. The stone pillars of the gateway let us upon a terraced lawn, where a fountain played, keeping bent plumes of water in the air. The lofty chateau of white stone had a broad front with wings. Eagle bade me note the two dovecots or pigeon towers, distinctly separate structures, one flanking each wing and demonstrating the antiquity of the house, for only nobles in medieval days were accorded the privilege of keeping doves.

There was a pleached walk, like that in the marquis' garden, of branches fattened and plaited to form an arbor supported by tree columns, which led to a summer house of stone smothered in ivy. We walked back and forth under this thick roof of verdure. Eagle's eye of brown hair was roughened over her radiant face, and the open throat of her gown showed pulses beating in her neck. Her lifted chin almost touched my arm as I told her all the Mittau story at her request.

"Poor Mme. d'Angouleme! The cautious priest and the king should not have taken you from me like that! She knew you as I knew you, and a woman's knowing is better than a man's proof. She will have times of doubting their policy. She will remember the expression of your mouth, your shrugs and gestures—the little traits of the child Louis that reappear in the man."

"I wish I had never gone to Mittau to give her a woman's distress."

"But that was a strange thing—that you should fall unconscious!"

"Not so strange," I said, and told her how many times before the eclipse—under the edge of which my boyhood was passed—had completely shadowed me. At the account of St. Felicie she leaned toward me, her hands clinched on her breast. When we came to the Hotel Dieu she leaned back pallid against the stone.

"Dear Marquis du Plessy!" she whispered as his name entered the story.

When it was ended she drew some deep breaths in the silence.

"Sire, you must be very careful. That Belleguer is an evil man."

"But a weak one."

"There may be a strength of court policy behind him."

"The policy of the court at Mittau is evidently a policy of denial."

"You sister believed in you?"

"Yes, she believed in me."

"I don't understand," said Mme. de Ferrier, leaning forward on her arms, "why Belleguer had you in London and another boy on the mountain."

"Perhaps we shall never understand it."

"I don't understand why he makes it his business to follow you."

"Let us not trouble ourselves about Belleguer."

"But are you safe in France since the Marquis du Plessy's death?"

"I am safe tonight at least."

"Yes, far safer than you would be in Paris."

"And Skenedonk is my guard?"

"I have sent a messenger to Plessy for him," Mme. de Ferrier said. "He will be here in the morning."

I thanked her for remembering him in the excitement of her coming. We heard a far, sweet call through a cleft of the hills, and Eagle turned her head.

"That must be the shepherd of Les Rochers. He has missed a lamb. Les Rochers is the most distant of our farms, but its night noises can be heard through an opening in the forest. Paul will soon be listening for all these sounds. We must drive to Les Rochers tomorrow. It was there that Cousin Philippe died."

I could not say how opportunely Cousin Philippe had died. The violation of her childhood by such a marriage rose up that instant a wordless tragedy.

"Sire, we are not observing etiquette in Mont-Louis as they observe it at Mittau. I have been talking very familiarly to my king. I will keep silent. You speak."

"Madame, you have forbidden me to speak."

She gave a startled look and said:

"Did you know Jerome Bonaparte has come back? He left his wife in America. She cannot be received in France because she has committed the crime of marrying a prince. She is to be divorced for political reasons."

"Jerome Bonaparte is a bound!" I spoke hotly.

"And his wife a venturesome woman to marry even a temporary prince."

"Like her sort, madame."

"Do you, sire?"

"Yes! I like a woman who can love."

"And ruin?"

"How could you ruin me?"

"The Saint-Micheis brought me up," said Eagle. "They taught me what is

lawful and unlawful. I will never do an unlawful thing to the disgrace and shame of my house. A woman should build her house, not tear it down."

"What is unlawful?"

"It is unlawful for me to encourage the suit of my sovereign."

"Am I ever likely to be anything but what they call in Mittau a pretender, Eagle?"

"That we do not know. You shall keep yourself free from entanglements."

"I am free from them—God knows I am free enough—the loneliest, most unfriended savage that ever set out to conquer his own."

"You were born to greatness. Great things will come to you."

"If you loved me I could make them come."

"Sire, it isn't healthy to sit in the night air. We must go out of the dew."

"Oh, who would be healthy! Come to that, who would be such a royal beggar as I am?"

"Remember," she said gravely, "that your claim was in a manner recognized

by one of the most cautious, one or the least ardent royalists in France."

The recognition she knew nothing about came to my lips, and I told her the whole story of the jewels. The snuffbox was in my pocket. Sophie Saint-Michel had often described it to her.

She sat and looked at me, contemplating the stupendous loss.

"The marquis advised me not to take them into Russia," I acknowledged.

"There is no robbery so terrible as the robbery committed by those who think they are doing right."

"I am one of the losing Bourbons."

"Can anything be hidden in that closet in the queen's dressing room wall?" mused Eagle. "I believe I could find it in the dark. Sophie told me so often where the secret spring may be touched. When the De Chamaunts took me to the Tuilleries I wanted to search for it. But all the state apartments are now on the second floor, and Mme. Bonaparte has her own rooms below. Evidently she knows nothing of the secrets of the place. The queen kept her most beautiful robes in that closet. It is no visible door. The wall opens. And we have heard that a door was made through the back of it to let upon a spiral staircase of stone, and through this the royal family made their escape to Varennes, when they were arrested and brought back."

We fell into silence at mention of the unsuccessful flight which could have changed history, and she rose and said, "Good night, sire."

Next morning there was such a delicious world to live in that breathing was a pleasure. Dew gaud spread far and wide over the radiant domain. Sounds from cattle and stables and the voices of servants drifted on the air. Doves wheeled around their towers and around the chateau standing like a white cliff.

I walked under the green canopy, watching the sun mount and waiting for Mme. de Ferrier. When she did appear the old man who had served her father followed with a tray. I could only say, "Good morning, madame," not daring to add, "I have scarcely slept for thinking of you."

"We will have our coffee out here," she told me.

The old servant gathered wall fruit for us, and she sent some in his hand to Paul. Through a festooned arch of the pavilion giving upon the terraces we saw a bird dart down to the fountain, tilt and drink, tilt and drink again and flash away. Immediately the multitudinous rejoicing of a skylark dropped from upper air. When men would send thanks to the very gate of heaven their envoy should be a skylark.

Eagle was like a little girl as she listened.

"This is the first day of September, sire."

"Is it? I thought it was the first day of creation."

"I mention the date that you may not forget it. Because I am going to give you something today."

My heart leaped like a conqueror's. Then her face went grave, like a child's when it is surprised in wickedness.

"But our fathers and mothers would have us forget their suffering in the festival of coming home, wouldn't they, Lazarre?"

"Surely, Eagle."

"Then why are you looking at me with reproach?"

"I'm not."

"Perhaps you don't like my dress?"

I told her it was the first time I had ever noticed anything she wore, and I liked it.

"I used to wear my mother's clothes. Ernestine and I made them over. But this is new, for the new day and the new life here."

"And the day," I reminded her, "is the 1st of September."

She laughed and opened her left hand, showing me two squat keys, so small that both had lain concealed under two of her finger tips.

"I am going to give you a key, sire."

"Will it unlock a woman's mind?"

"It will open a padlocked book. Last night I found a little blank leaved book with wooden covers. It was fastened by a padlock, and these keys were tied to it. You may have one key; I will keep the other."

"The key to a padlocked book with nothing in it?"

Her eyes tantalized me.

"I am going to put something in it. So that St. Michel said I had a gift for—putting down my thoughts. If the gift appeared to Sophie when I was a child it must grow in me by use. Every day I shall put some of my life into the book, and when I die I will bequeath it to you!"

"Take back the key, madame. I have no desire to look into your coffin."

She extended her hand.

"Then our good and kind friend, Count de Chamaunt, shall have it."

"He shall not!"

I held to her hand and kept the key. She slipped away from me. The laughter of the child yet rose through the dignity of the woman.

"When may I read this book, Eagle?"

"Never, of my free will, sire. How could I set down all I thought about you, for instance, if the certainty was hanging over me that you would read my candid opinions and punish me for them?"

"Then of what use is the key?"

"You would rather have it than give it to another, wouldn't you?"

"Decidedly."

"Well, you will have the key to my thoughts."

"And if the book ever falls into my hands—"

"I will see that it doesn't!"

"I will say, years from now—"

"Twenty?"

"Twenty? Oh, Eagle!"

"Ten."

"Months? That's too long!"

"No, ten years, sire."

"Not ten years, Eagle. Say eight."

"No, nine."

"Seven. If the book falls into my hands at the end of seven years may I open it?"

"I may safely promise you that," she laughed. "The book will never fall into your hands."

I took from my pocket the gold snuffbox with the portraits on the lid and placed my key carefully therein. Eagle leaned forward to look at them. She took the box in her hand and gazed with long reverence, drooping her head.

Turning my head I saw an old man come out on the terrace.

He tried to search in every direction, his gray head and faded eyes moving anxiously. Mme. de Ferrier was still. I heard her lay the snuffbox on the stone seat. I knew, though I could not let myself watch her, that she stood up against the wall, a woman of stone, her lips chiselled apart.

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lawful and unlawful. I will never do an unlawful thing to the disgrace and shame of my house. A woman should build her house, not tear it down."

"What is unlawful?"

"It is unlawful for me to encourage the suit of my sovereign."

"Am I ever likely to be anything but what they call in Mittau a pretender, Eagle?"

"That we do not know. You shall keep yourself free from entanglements."

"I am free from them—God knows I am free enough—the loneliest, most unfriended savage that ever set out to conquer his own."

"You were born to greatness. Great things will come to you."

"If you loved me I could make them come."

"Sire, it isn't healthy to sit in the night air. We must go out of the dew."

"Oh, who would be healthy! Come to that, who would be such a royal beggar as I am?"

"Remember," she said gravely, "that your claim was in a manner recognized

by one of the most cautious, one or the least ardent royalists in France."

The recognition she knew nothing about came to my lips, and I told her the whole story of the jewels. The snuffbox was in my pocket. Sophie Saint-Michel had often described it to her.

She sat and looked at me, contemplating the stupendous loss.

"The marquis advised me not to take them into Russia," I acknowledged.

"There is no robbery so terrible as the robbery committed by those who think they are doing right."

"I am one of the losing Bourbons."

"Can anything be hidden in that closet in the queen's dressing room wall?" mused Eagle. "I believe I could find it in the dark. Sophie told me so often where the secret spring may be touched. When the De Chamaunts took me to the Tuilleries I wanted to search for it. But all the state apartments are now on the second floor, and Mme. Bonaparte has her own rooms below. Evidently she knows nothing of the secrets of the place. The queen kept her most beautiful robes in that closet. It is no visible door. The wall opens. And we have heard that a door was made through the back of it to let upon a spiral staircase of stone, and through this the royal family made their escape to Varennes, when they were arrested and brought back."

We fell into silence at mention of the unsuccessful flight which could have changed history, and she rose and said, "Good night, sire."

Next morning there was such a delicious world to live in that breathing was a pleasure. Dew gaud spread far and wide over the radiant domain. Sounds from cattle and stables and the voices of servants drifted on the air. Doves wheeled around their towers and around the chateau standing like a white cliff.

I walked under the green canopy, watching the sun mount and waiting for Mme. de Ferrier. When she did appear the old man who had served her father followed with a tray. I could only say, "Good morning, madame," not daring to add, "I have scarcely slept for thinking of you."

"We will have our coffee out here," she told me.

The old servant gathered wall fruit for us, and she sent some in his hand to Paul. Through a festooned arch of the pavilion giving upon the terraces we saw a bird dart down to the fountain, tilt and drink, tilt and drink again and flash away. Immediately the multitudinous rejoicing of a skylark dropped from upper air. When men would send thanks to the very gate of heaven their envoy should be a skylark.

Eagle was like a little girl as she listened.

"This is the first day of September, sire."

"Is it? I thought it was the first day of creation."

"I mention the date that you may not forget it. Because I am going to give you something today."

My heart leaped like a conqueror's. Then her face went grave, like a child's when it is surprised in wickedness.

"But our fathers and mothers would have us forget their suffering in the festival of coming home, wouldn't they, Lazarre?"

"Surely, Eagle."

"Then why are you looking at me with reproach?"

"I'm not."

"Perhaps you don't like my dress?"

I told her it was the first time I had ever noticed anything she wore, and I liked it.

"I used to wear my mother's clothes. Ernestine and I made them over. But this is new, for the new day and the new life here."

"And the day," I reminded her, "is the 1st of September."

She laughed and opened her left hand, showing me two squat keys, so small that both had lain concealed under two of her finger tips.

"I am going to give you a key, sire."

"Will it unlock a woman's mind?"

"It will open a padlocked book. Last night I found a little blank leaved book with wooden covers. It was fastened by a padlock, and these keys were tied to it. You may have one key; I will keep the other."

"The key to a padlocked book with nothing in it?"

Her eyes tantalized me.

"I am going to put something in it. So that St. Michel said I had a gift for—putting down my thoughts. If the gift appeared to Sophie when I was a child it must grow in me by use. Every day I shall put some of my life into the book, and when I die I will bequeath it to you!"

"Take back the key, madame. I have no desire to look into your coffin."

She extended her hand.

"Then our good and kind friend, Count de Chamaunt, shall have it."

"He shall not!"

I held to her hand and kept the key. She slipped away from me. The laughter of the child yet rose through the dignity of the woman.

"When may I read this book, Eagle?"

"Never, of my free will, sire. How could I set down all I thought about you, for instance, if the certainty was hanging over me that you would read my candid opinions and punish me for them?"

"Then of what use is the key?"

"You would rather have it than give it to another, wouldn't you?"

"Decidedly."

"Well, you will have the key to my thoughts."

"And if the book ever falls into my hands—"

"I will see that it doesn't!"

"I will say, years from now—"

"Twenty?"

"Twenty? Oh, Eagle!"

"Ten."

"Months? That's too long!"

"No, ten years, sire."

"Not ten years, Eagle. Say eight."

"No, nine."

"Seven. If the book falls into my hands at the end of seven years may I open it?"

"I may safely promise you that," she laughed. "The book will never fall into your hands."

I took from my pocket the gold snuffbox with the portraits on the lid and placed my key carefully therein. Eagle leaned forward to look at them. She took the box in her hand and gazed with long reverence, drooping her head.

Turning my head I saw an old man come out on the terrace.

He tried to search in every direction, his gray head and faded eyes moving anxiously. Mme. de Ferrier was still. I heard her lay the snuffbox on the stone seat. I knew, though I could not let myself watch her, that she stood up against the wall, a woman of stone, her lips chiselled apart.

"Eagle!" the old man cried from the terrace.

She whispered, "Yes, Cousin Philippe!"

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