

The MARSHAL

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SYNOPSIS.

Francois Beaupre, a peasant babe of three years, after an amusing incident in which Marshal Ney's name is made a Chevalier of France by the Emperor Napoleon, who prophesied that the boy might one day be a marshal of France, under another name. At the age of ten Francois visits General Baron Gaspard Gouraud, who with Alice, his seven-year-old daughter, lives at the Chateau. A soldier of the Empire under Napoleon he fires the boy's imagination with stories of his campaigns. The boy becomes a copyist for the general and learns of the friendship between the general and Marquis Zappi, who campaigned with the general under Napoleon. Marquis Zappi and his son, Pietro, arrive at the Chateau. The general agrees to care for the Marquis's son while the former goes to America. The Marquis asks Francois to be a friend of his son. The boy solemnly promises. Francois goes to the Chateau to live. Marquis Zappi dies, leaving Pietro as heir to the general's estate. Alice, Pietro and Francois meet a strange boy who proves to be Prince Louis Napoleon. Francois saves his life. The general discovers Francois loves Alice, and extracts a promise from him that he will not interfere between the girl and Pietro. Francois goes to Italy and meets Pietro. Queen Hortense plans the escape of her son Louis Napoleon by disguising him and Marquis Zappi's place. Francois takes Marquis Zappi's place, who is ill in the escape of Hortense and Louis. Dressed as Louis's brother, Francois takes the Austrian from the hotel allowing the prince and his mother to escape. Francois is a prisoner of the Austrians for five years. In the castle owned by Pietro in Italy, he discovers in his guard one of Pietro's old family servants, and through him sends word to his friends of his escape. The general, Alice and Pietro plan Francois's escape. Francois receives a note from Pietro explaining in detail how to escape from prison. Alice awaits Francois at horseback and leads him to his friends on board the American sailing vessel, the "Lovely Lucy." Francois, a guide, Harry Hampton, and "Lovely Lucy," goes to America to manage Pietro's estate in Virginia. Lucy Hampton falls in love with Francois. Louis Napoleon in America becomes the guest of the Hamptons, where he meets Francois. Lucy Hampton reveals her love for Francois after the latter saves the life of Harry Hampton and is himself injured in the effort. Francois tells Lucy of his love for Alice. He returns to France and tells Alice his one wish in life is that she love Pietro. Francois joins the political plotters. His health fails and he is forced to return to America. Pietro summons him to London to aid him in his plot to gain the French throne. Lucy Hampton (his cousin, Pietro) goes to Alice and is accepted. They plan a letter to Francois telling him his wish is granted. Francois on the night before the battle shows the prince a letter from Alice, which he thinks is a confession of her love for him.

CHAPTER XXXI.—Continued.

Prince Louis saw the dawning of consternation. Rapidly he considered. Was it well to take away a man's happiness and courage just before a fight? He remembered some words of Francois spoken three years before, words whose dramatic baroness had struck him. "When a knight of the old time went into battle," the young man had said, "he wore on his helmet the badge of his lady, and the thought of her in his heart. A man fights better so." Very well. This blind knight should have his letter, with the meaning he had read into it, for his lady's badge, and he should fight tomorrow with the thought of her in his heart. The letter suggested another meaning to sophisticated Louis Bonaparte, but there is, no need to hasten the feet of unhappiness. The resonant French voice spoke at last in an unused accent of cordiality and the Prince lied, with ungrudging graciousness.

"Mistaken, my Francois! Not at all. The little billet-doux breathes love for you in each line—there is no question! But, mon ami, you have not finished your story." So Francois explained about the letter left with Lucy Hampton and its premature sending. "That has reached her now—she knows now that I love her, she knows what has really been my lifelong wish—she has hurried this," and his hand crushed the note tenderly—"she has hurried this to me before the fight—that I might know her love also—that I might fight better for you, my Prince—Louis—with that joy in my heart." Prince Louis, his head thrown back, his expressionless eyes watching the rings of smoke which he puffed from his mouth—ring after ring, mounting in dream-like procession to the low ceiling, considered again. Somewhere in the chain of events of this love-affair his keen practical sense felt a link that did not fit—a link forced into connection. Vaguely he discerned how it was—something had happened to the Virginian letter—there had been a confusion somewhere. To him the four words of Alice's postscript were final. "Pietro sends his love." A subconscious reasoning made him certain that Pietro would not have come into such a letter if it had been indeed a love-letter, that the three lines of writing just before the battle could not have had another man's name, if they had been written to the man whom she loved. Very dimly, very surely the Prince concluded these things; and then he lowered his cigar, and his gray dull eyes came down from the ceiling and rested, kindly on the radiant face. "You are right, my friend. It was an exquisite thought of your lady-love to put this other weapon, this bright sword of happiness into your hand, to fight with tomorrow. Mon Dieu! we will reward her by sending her back a Marshal's baton by you; a Marshal's baton tomorrow, Francois! How would it sound, par exemple, to say 'Madame la Maréchale'?"

The light from Francois's eyes was like a lamp. "My Prince—Sire—there are three things I have desired all my life, all great things, but of them that one—the baton of a Marshal—is the least. If I might win her love—I have said; if I might help you in Napoleon's

square. If the fourth artillery followed its colonel, if the day went well, this was the core of his army, Colonel Vaudrey was in the center of the square; the Prince marched quietly to him and as he came, with a sharp simultaneous clatter that was the music of Heaven to his ears, the whole regiment presented arms.

In the glowing light the soldiers who fronted toward him could see that the colorless face turned gray, but that was all, and quickly Colonel Vaudrey spoke to his men.

"Soldiers of the fourth artillery," he said loudly, "a revolution begins today under the nephew of the Emperor Napoleon. He is before you, and comes to lead you. He has returned to his land to give back the people their rights, the army its greatness. He trusts in your courage, your devotion to accomplish this glorious mission. My soldiers, your colonel has answered for you. Shout then with me 'Long live Napoleon! Long live the Emperor!'"

The terse soldierly words were hardly finished when the regiment, strongly Bonapartist always, carried off its feet now by the sight of the Prince, by the honor of being the first to whom he came caught up the cry, and the deep voices sent it rolling down the empty streets. Louis Bonaparte standing erect, motionless, impassive as always, wondered if a pulse might beat harder than his and not break. He held up his hand, and rapidly, yet with lingering shouts of enthusiasm, the tumult quieted.

"Soldiers," he said, "I have come to you first because between you and me there are great memories. With you the Emperor, my uncle, served as captain; with you he won glory at the siege of Toulon; you opened the gates of Grenoble to him when he came back from Elba. Soldiers, the honor of beginning a new empire shall be yours; yours shall be the honor of saluting first the eagle of Austerlitz and Wagram." He caught the standard from an officer and held it high. "It is the sign of French glory; it has shone over every battlefield; it has passed through every capitol of Europe. Soldiers, rally to the eagle! I trust it to you—we will march today against the oppressors, crying 'Long live France!'"

One who has not heard a regiment gone mad can not know how it was. With deafening clatter and roar every sword was drawn and the shakos flew aloft and again and again and again the men's deep voices sent up in broken magnificent chorus the great historic cry to which armies had gone into battle.

"Vive l'Empereur! Vive Napoleon!"

The souls of a thousand men were on fire with memories and traditions, with a passion of consecration to a cause, and as if the spell of the name grew stronger with its repetition they shouted over and over, in tremendous unison, over and over.

"Vive Napoleon! Vive l'Empereur!"

It was necessary at last for the quiet slender young man who was the storm-center to raise his hand again, and with a word, with the glimmer of a smile to speak his gratitude—to stop the storm. There was much to be done. The fourth artillery was but one of several regiments to be gained if the victory were to be complete. Colonel Lombard was dispatched to a printing office with proclamations to be struck off; Lieutenant Laity hurried away to his battalion; a detachment was sent to hold the telegraph office; the tumult once quieted, the yard was a scene of efficient business, for all this had been planned and each officer knew his work. In a very few moments the officers of the third artillery who were with the Prince had hastened to their quarters, another had been sent to arouse the forty-sixth of the line, at the Place d'Alton barracks, and shortly Prince Louis himself was on his way to the same place. Through the streets of the city, no longer empty, he passed with his officers, and the people poured from their houses, and joined and answered the shouts of the soldiers.

"Vive l'Empereur!" the soldiers cried. "It is the nephew of Napoleon," and the citizens threw back, "Vive l'Empereur! It is the son of the honest king of Holland! It is the grandson of Josephine!"

They pressed so close about the small figure in its Swiss uniform of a colonel that for a moment he was separated from his officers, and Colonel Vaudrey, smiling for all his military discipline, was forced to order his mounted artillerymen to clear the road. Every moment an old soldier broke out of the mass and embraced the eagle which Lieutenant de Querelles carried proudly high above all this emotion; the soldiers' eyes flashed with success; the Prince's heart beat high for joy to know that he had not misread the heart of army or people. When the column passed the gendarmes the guard turned out and presented arms, shouting, "Long live the Emperor!" So he went through the streets of Boulogne, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, eight long years before he came to his own, and marched in triumph and acclamation to a failure.

And close by his side, his look as radiant as the Prince's look was contained and impassive, marched always Francois Beaupre. The hard-earned military knowledge, the patient toll of preparation had come into play, and in a hundred ways the man had been useful. With no exact rank as yet, but ready at any moment, eager for the hardest task, never asking for rest, quick-witted, resourceful, officers as well as Prince had developed a habit of turning to Beaupre for service after service. And always they were met with a glad consent which encouraged them to ask more until the Prince said:

"The city was tranquil when Prince Louis reached the barrack-gate, and the soldier-blood in him rushed in a tide when he saw sixty mounted artillerymen posted at the entrance, and beyond, in the yard, statue-like, warlike, silent, the regiment formed in

"It is the case of the willing horse; I will not permit that my right-hand man be worked to death—it must stop."

Today, however, Francois had a definite duty of responsibility. While the Prince marched, gathering strength at every yard, through the town toward the Place d'Alton at its farther side, Colonel Couard of the third artillery had gone to proclaim the great news to his regiment and to hold them ready. In case of success at the Place d'Alton, Beaupre was to go back and bring them to join the Prince. In case of failure they were to be his reserve. The Place d'Alton barracks lay between town and ramparts, to be reached from the town side only by a narrow lane; but the ramparts commanded with a large open space the yard where the soldiers assembled. If the Prince entered from the town, side, from the street—Faubourg Pierre—only an escort could go with him. If he went by the ramparts the whole enthusiastic fourth artillery might be at his back. This then was the route chosen.

But as the Prince and the regiment and the swinging shouting mass of citizens made its way toward the quarters, suddenly, too late, the off-

cers about his Highness saw that some one had blundered. Someone in the van a man had lost his head, had forgotten, and the compact inelastic procession had been led toward the approach from the Faubourg Pierre, the narrow lane at the side toward the city. It was a serious mistake, yet not of necessity fatal, and at all events they must make the best of it. The Prince could not make a dramatic entrance at the head of a shouting regiment, but for all that he might win the forty-sixth.

He did win the forty-sixth. Something had happened to the officer sent to arouse them—another slip in the chain—and instead of being drawn up in the yard they were getting ready for Sunday inspection, but they flocked to the windows, at the noise, they rushed into the yard at the name of Napoleon. An old sergeant of the Imperial Guard ran forward and kissed Prince Louis's hand, and the reserved face lightened—he knew the value of a bit of sentiment with Frenchmen; he was not wrong; in a moment the line regiment had caught up the cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" raised by the artillerymen, and the earlier scene of the Austerlitz barracks was being repeated here. Prince Louis, pale and composed in the center of the roar of voices, the seething sea of excitement, heard a word at his ear and turned.

"Sire, it is success. I go to bring up your Majesty's other regiment," Francois said, and the Prince answered quietly:

"Yes, it is success. Go, mon ami."

In a moment the messenger had thrown himself on the horse of an artilleryman and forced a way through the receding mass, down the lane, and out to the Faubourg Pierre. In the free street he galloped the horse, through the windings that he had learned with this moment in his mind. The third was drawn up waiting, and a shout like a clap of thunder greeted his news. Buoyant, proud, he took his place by the colonel at their head, and rally the joyful march began. The sun had come from behind the clouds of early morning and shone gloriously on glancing steel, on the brilliant swinging line of the regiment. Low branches of trees brushed Francois's shoulder as he rode and the touch thrilled him, for he knew by it that this was true and not a dream, and he, Francois Beaupre, was leading a regiment of France to France's Emperor.

Suddenly a man galloped from a side street, in front of the advancing troops; he stopped, saluted, called a word. It was not a day to take anything for granted; Colonel Couard halted the regiment.

"The arsenal," the man gasped. "They have taken Monsieur de Persigny prisoner. Monsieur le General Volrol is on his way, but he is distant. It is a step from here. The third artillery could arrive there before him—they would surrender—Monsieur de Persigny would be released"—he stopped breathless.

The colonel turned an inquiring look on Francois. As the Prince's messenger, as the man whom he had seen closest to the Prince's person, he deferred to him, and Francois realized that he must make, and make quickly, a momentous decision. The arsenal was immense and lightly guarded. De Persigny had been sent with a small force to take it, for the ammunition it held might at any moment be of supreme importance. It seemed that the detachment which guarded it had been underrated, for it had made prisoners of De Persigny and his men, and this aide-de-camp had alone es-

aped. If they were to be rescued, if the arsenal was to be gained for the Prince, this very moment must be seized. General Volrol, royalist, the commandant at Boulogne, was on his way with reinforcements and the third night well hold the arsenal against him but not gain it from him. With his whole being concentrated Francois thought. The orders were plain to lead the third artillery to join the Prince on the ramparts. But there are times in history when to obey orders is treachery. Was not this moment, heavy with the right or wrong of his decision, one of them? Was it not the part of a mind capable of greatness to know and grasp the flying second of opportunity? Would not the Prince reproach him, if he stupidly let this one chance in a thousand go by, for servile fear of disobeying orders? He had left his Highness safe with two regiments at his back; this other could do nothing at the Place d'Alton barracks but swell the ranks; here, by a turn of a hand, they might win for the cause the very blood and bones of success, a mighty arsenal, and for themselves honor and gratitude from their Emperor. In Francois's mind was a touch of innocent vanity that he should have the power to render so signal a service, yet no thought at all for himself or for the honor he might gain or lose; whole-heartedly he weighed the reasons why or why not it would be best for the Prince.

The aide-de-camp's voice broke in. "My Colonel, I beg you, I implore you, save Monsieur de Persigny. The Prince loves him—he will be very angry if he is left helpless—they threaten to execute him—I myself heard—I implore you, Monsieur le Colonel. For the rest, it is indeed the moment of fate to win the arsenal."

Francois's face lit with a fire of decision. "My Colonel, it is for the Prince—it would be his will—we must not let slip the gift of destiny. To the arsenal!"

And while orders rang out sharply and the regiment wheeled into sliding lines that doubled and parted and flowed together again in an elastic stream toward the looming arsenal, Francois, with a quick word to De Persigny's aide-de-camp, was writing rapidly on a bit of paper.

"You will take this to the Prince at once," he ordered, and the young officer saluted, for he, too, knew, as most of them did, this man's anomalous yet strong hold on Prince Louis.

Francois rode again to the colonel's side, and he did not doubt that he had decided rightly.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Accolade at Last.

It is a common tragedy that men, being human, cannot see all sides of a question; that a decision right in one light may bring disaster in another. If events had stayed where he left them, Francois Beaupre and Colonel Couard and his regiment would have won honor and eternal gratitude from Louis Bonaparte for the quarter of an hour's work which made the arsenal theirs. Events, instead of standing still, or going forward, took an unexpected sinister turn, not long after Francois's going.

The happy Prince, smiling the shadowy smile which made his face winning, stood in the center of triumphant turmoil; his new followers, the men of the forty-sixth, crowded about him shouting, cheering, kissing his hands, and the loyal fourth artillerymen fraternized, embraced, congratulated the men of the line regiment. The narrow courtyard was a hubbub of rapturous excitement, and the Prince's officers—Montholon, Vaudrey, Volrol, Parquin, d'Huin, Querelles—these and others whose names Frenchmen knew, surrounded the small figure which yet had so much of royalty, and laughed and chatted light-heartedly. In a few moments, when Colonel Laity's engineers and the third artillery should have arrived the Prince would have five thousand men under his command. The great game was practically won—Prince Louis was all but Emperor.

Suddenly, above the sea of sound, a commotion was heard at the farther end of the barrack yard. The colonel of the forty-sixth, Colonel Talandier, had arrived. Very loyal to Louis Philippe, very angry at the scene before him, he would not believe the news. He called excitedly, and the men's voices died down as they saw him gesticulating.

"Soldiers," he cried, "you are deceived! This man for whom you are shouting is an adventurer, an impostor!"

In the shock of silence which followed his words, another voice rang out, clear and indignant, the voice of a staff-officer whom they all knew.

"It is not the nephew of the Emperor! It is the nephew of Colonel Vaudrey! I recognize him!" the officer cried in a strong staccato, and a gasp as if ice-water had been scattered went through the crowded place.

There is nothing more absurd in history than the instant effect of this quick-witted lie. Only with a mercurial French mob, perhaps, could it have succeeded, but it succeeded here with hopeless swiftness. It flew from mouth to mouth—they were cheated, tricked; the Emperor's nephew, their Prince, had not come; this young man was a make-believe, a substitute, the nephew of an officer; some of the soldiers who had shown most enthusiasm almost lost their minds now in rage.

Colonel Talandier began to form his men; the Prince, composed as ever, yet earnest, swift, tried to rally his, but it was impossible to start anywhere. In this confusion, for line and artillery had become mixed in an unmanageable mob. A word from either

Prince or colonel and blood would have flowed.

Yet the steadfast mind kept its hope; he glanced every moment toward the ramparts. The third must appear there shortly; it could not be many minutes. They would turn the tide. One glimpse of that solid swinging regiment and the day would be saved—and salvation was certain. The third was coming, would be here any second—Francois's faithfulness could be trusted.

Slowly, with his officers crowding about him, he was driven toward the barracks wall, and, in a flash, from somewhere, a man was before him, thrusting a bit of paper at him. With a swift movement he had it opened and read:

"Destiny throws arsenal into our hands. Have taken third artillery to hold it. I wait to bring the news—a jewel for your crown. Vive l'Empereur!"

Beaupre.

Few men ever heard Louis Napoleon sob, yet the officers stood about him at that moment caught a sound that wrung them. It meant the end, and they knew it. Passionately he crushed the paper and threw it into the seething mass.

"Fool! He has thrown away the empire," he hissed through set teeth. "If I could run him through!"

Then, quickly, he was himself again. Serenely while the maddened soldiers pressed on him, he turned and spoke a quiet word to his friends, and then, serenely, too, with a gaze that was half contemptuous, half friendly, he left himself to be made prisoner.

Yet the fight was not all over even now. On the ramparts, where the Prince and his column should have been, had gathered from the Faubourg Pierre a formidable crowd, who advanced angrily to his rescue, and pelted the line regiment with stones, and cried again and again, "Vive l'Empereur!" Colonel Talandier had to reckon with a many-sided trouble. But the heart of it was in his hands, and slowly order and the old rule were coming back.

The tumult of the struggle had quieted, the volatile forty-sixth regiment, returned to its allegiance, stood formed in ranks, in appearance as firm for the king as the everlasting hills, and, at the end of the court was a sad and silent, yet a stately group of men, the Prince who had almost been Emperor and those who had watched slipping with his hope, their hopes of grandeur.

Suddenly a horse's hoofs rang down the lane from the Faubourg; a rider clattered at gallop into the yard and across the front of the soldiers, and every one in the agitated company saw that the man reeling in his saddle was wounded. With blind gaze he stared about as he reined in, and then he caught sight of the sorry group, the Prince and his officers. To Francois Beaupre, clutching to this world by one thread of duty, this was the victorious Emperor and his triumphant staff. With a choking shout he threw himself from the horse and fell, too far gone to stand, at the Prince's feet.

"Sire, I bring you the arsenal," he stammered painfully, loudly. In the silence of the courtyard one heard every word. "Two wishes—good fairies"—he gasped. And then, his mouth twisting to a smile, "the third—is no matter."

Louis Bonaparte looked down at the man whose dying face stared up at him in a rapture of loyalty; whose life had been consecrated to him; whose death was for him; who had lost him an empire. For a second a struggle shook him, and then the large kindness through which he came nearest to greatness, overflowed. In the career to come was no finer moment, no higher inspiration for Prince Louis

than this. He bent close to the glazing eyes.

"Courage!" he said clearly. "Courage, mon ami. Live for me and for our country. Live, my brother Francois—Chevalier Beaupre, Marshal of the Empire." And the Prince's sword flashed out and touched his shoulder.

The other world closing about him Francois heard—they did not doubt it who saw the eyes flame as a firefly flames out of darkness, and when his lips stirred they knew that he wished to cry once more "Vive l'Empereur!"

Frenchmen all, shaken with the living drama, the ruined men who stood about a defeated Prince cried it for him—the old magic cry of the Bonapartes. With lips lifted, as one man, "Vive l'Empereur!" the deep voices cried, hailing a lost cause for a lost life. But only the Prince knew that a thought came after; only he caught, on the gasp which let the soul out, a girl's name. He bent quickly again, with an eager assurance, but it was late. The accolade of a higher king had touched his servant, and the knightly soul of Francois had risen.

THE END.



"The Arsenal!" the Man Gasped.



"Soldiers! The Honor of Beginning a New Empire Shall Be Yours!"



"Sire! I Bring You the Arsenal."