

"Gentlemen," said General Clark, "this is beside the question, and I will not have these petty quarrels. I may as well say to you now that I have chosen the Citizen Captain to go at once to New Orleans and organize a regiment among the citizens there faithful to France. On account of his family and supposed Royalist tendencies he will not be suspected. I fear that a month at least has yet to elapse before our expedition can move."

"It is one wise choice," put in Monsieur Gignoux.

"*Monsieur le général* and gentlemen," said the Sieur de St. Gré, gracefully, "I thank you ver' much for the confidence. I leave by first flatboat and will have all things stir up when you come. The citizens of Louisiane await you. If necessair, we have hole in levee ready to cut."

"Citizens," interrupted General Clark, sitting down before the ink-pot, "let us hear the Quartermaster's report of the supplies at Knob Licks, and Citizen Sullivan's account of the boats. But hold," he cried, glancing around him, "where is Captain Temple? I heard that he had come to Louisville from the Cumberland to-day. Is he not going with you to New Orleans, St. Gré?"

I took up the name involuntarily.

"Captain Temple," I repeated, while they stared at me. "Nicholas Temple?"

It was Auguste de St. Gré who replied.

"The sem," he said. "I recall he was along with you in *Nouvelle Orléans*. He is at ze tavern, and he has had one gran' fight, and he is ver'—I am sorry—intoxicate—"

I know not how I made my way through the black woods to Fort Finney, where I discovered Jake Landrassé and his canoe. The road was long, and yet short, for my brain whirled with the expectation of seeing Nick again, and the thought of this poor, pathetic, ludicrous expedition compared to the sublime one I had known.

George Rogers Clark had come to this!

CHAPTER III

LOUISVILLE CELEBRATES

"THEY have gran' time in Louisville to-night, Davy," said Jake Landrassé, as he paddled me towards the Kentucky shore; "you hear?"

"I should be stone deaf if I didn't," I answered, for the shouting which came from the town filled me with forebodings.

"They come back from the barbecue full of whiskey," said Jake, "and a young man at the tavern come out on the porch and he say, 'Get ready you all to go to Louisiana! You been hole back long enough by tyranny.' Sam Barker come along and say he a Federalist. They done have a gran' fight, he and the young feller, and Sam got licked. He went at Sam just like a harricane."

"And then?" I demanded.

"Them four wanted to leave," said Jake, taking no trouble to disguise his disgust, "and I had to fetch 'em over. I've got to go back and wait for 'em now," and he swore with sincere disappointment. "I reckon there ain't been such a jamboree in town for years."

Jake had not exaggerated. Gentlemen from Moore's Settlement, from Sullivan's Station on the Bear Grass,—to be brief, the entire male population of the county seemed to have moved upon Louisville after the barbecue, and I paused involuntarily at the sight which met my eyes as I came into the street. A score of sputtering, smoking pine-knots threw a lurid light on as many hilarious groups, and revealed, fantastically enough, the boles and lower branches of the big shade trees above them. Navigation for the individual, difficult enough lower down,

in front of the tavern became positively dangerous. There was a human eddy, — nay, a maelstrom would better describe it. Fights began, but ended abortively by reason of the inability of the combatants to keep their feet; one man whose face I knew passed me with his hat afire, followed by several companions in gusts of laughter, for the torch-bearers were careless and burned the ears of their friends in their enthusiasm. Another person whom I recognized lacked a large portion of the front of his attire, and seemed sublimely unconscious of the fact. His face was badly scratched. Several other friends of mine were indulging in brief intervals of rest on the ground, and I barely avoided stepping on them. Still other gentlemen were delivering themselves of the first impressive periods of orations, only to be drowned by the cheers of their auditors. These were the snatches which I heard as I picked my way onward with exaggerated fear:—

“Gentlemen, the Mississippi is ours, let the tyrants who forbid its use beware!” “To hell with the Federal government!” “I tell you, sirs, this land is ours. We have conquered it with our blood, and I reckon no Spaniard is goin’ to stop us. We ain’t come this far to stand still. We settled Kaintuck, fit off the redskins, and we’ll march across the Mississippi and on and on—” “To Louisiany!” they shouted, and the whole crowd would take it up, “To Louisiany! Open the river!”

So absorbed was I in my own safety and progress that I did not pause to think (as I have often thought since) of the full meaning of this, though I had marked it for many years. The support given to Wilkinson’s plots, to Clark’s expedition, was merely the outward and visible sign of the onward sweep of a resistless race. In spite of untold privations and hardships, of cruel warfare and massacre, these people had toiled over the mountains into this land, and impatient of check or hindrance would, even as Clark had predicted, when their numbers were sufficient leap the Mississippi. Night or day, drunk or sober, they spoke of this thing with an ever increasing vehemence, and no man of reflection who had read their history could

say that they would be thwarted. One day Louisiana would be theirs and their children’s for the generations to come. One day Louisiana would be American.

That I was alive and unscratched when I got as far as the tavern is a marvel. Amongst all the passion-lit faces which surrounded me I could get no sight of Nick’s, and I managed to make my way to a momentarily quiet corner of the porch. As I leaned against the wall there, trying to think what I should do, there came a great cheering from a little way up the street, and then I straightened in astonishment. Above the cheering came the sound of a drum beaten in marching time, and above that there burst upon the night what purported to be the “Marseillaise,” taken up and bawled by a hundred drunken throats and without words. Those around me who were sufficiently nimble began to run towards the noise, and I ran after them. And there, marching down the middle of the street at the head of a ragged and most indecorous column of twos, in the centre of a circle of light cast by a pine-knot which Joe Handy held, was Mr. Nicholas Temple. His bearing, if a trifle unsteady, was proud, and—if I could believe my eyes—around his neck was slung the thing which I prized above all my possessions,—the drum which I had carried to Kaskaskia and Vincennes! He had taken it from the peg in my room.

I shrink from putting on paper the sentimental side of my nature, and indeed I could give no adequate idea of my affection for that drum. And then there was Nick, who had been lost to me for five years! My impulse was to charge the procession, seize Nick and the drum together, and drag them back to my room; but the futility and danger of such a course were apparent, and the caution for which I am noted prevented my undertaking it. The procession, augmented by all those to whom sufficient power of motion remained, cheered by the helpless but willing ones on the ground, swept on down the street and through the town. Even at this late day I shame to write it! Behold me, David Ritchie, Federalist, execrably sober, at the head of the column behind the leader. Was it

twenty minutes, or an hour, that we paraded? This I know, that we slighted no street in the little town of Louisville. What was my bearing,—whether proud or angry or carelessly indifferent,—I know not. The glare of Joe Handy's torch fell on my face, Joe Handy's arm and that of another gentleman, the worse for liquor, were linked in mine, and they saw fit to applaud at every step my conversion to the cause of Liberty. We passed time and time again the respectable door-yards of my Federalist friends, and I felt their eyes upon me with that look which the angels have for the fallen. Once, in front of Mr. Wharton's house, Mr. Handy burned my hair, apologized, staggered, and I took the torch! And I used it to good advantage in saving the drum from capture. For Mr. Temple, with all the will in the world, had begun to stagger. At length, after marching seemingly half the night, they halted by common consent before the house of a prominent Democrat who shall be nameless, and, after some minutes of vain importuning, Nick, with a tattoo on the drum, marched boldly up to the gate and into the yard. A desperate cunning came to my aid. I flung away the torch, leaving the head of the column in darkness, broke from Mr. Handy's embrace, and, seizing Nick by the arm, led him onward through the premises, he drumming with great docility. Followed by a few stragglers only (some of whom went down in contact with the trees of the orchard), we came to a gate at the back which I knew well, which led directly into the little yard that fronted my own rooms behind Mr. Crede's store. Pulling Nick through the gate, I slammed it, and he was only beginning to protest when I had him safe within my door, and the bolt slipped behind him. As I struck a light something fell to the floor with a crash, an odor of alcohol filled the air, and as the candle caught the flame I saw a shattered whiskey bottle at my feet and a room which had been given over to carousing. In spite of my feelings I could not but laugh at the perfectly irresistible figure my cousin made, as he stood before me with the drum slung in front of him. His hat was gone, his dust-covered clothes

awry, but he smiled at me benignly and without a trace of surprise.

"Sho you've come back at lasht, Davy," he said: "You're—you're very—irregular. You'll lose—law bishness. Y-you're worse'n Andy Jackson—he's always fightin'."

I relieved him, unprotesting, of the drum, thanking my stars there was so much as a stick left of it. He watched me with a silent and exaggerated interest as I laid it on the table. From a distance without came the shouts of the survivors making for the tavern.

"'Sfortunate you had the drum, Davy," he said gravely, "'rwe'd had no procession."

"It is fortunate I have it now," I answered, looking ruefully at the battered rim where Nick had missed the skin in his ardor.

"Davy," said he, "funny thing—I didn't know you wash a Jacobite. Sh'ou hear," he added relevantly, "th' Andy Jackson was married?"

"No," I answered, having no great interest in Mr. Jackson. "Where have you been seeing him again?"

"Nashville on Cumberland. Jackson'sh county sholicitor,—devil of a man. I'll tell you, Davy," he continued, laying an uncertain hand on my shoulder and speaking with great earnestness, "I had Chicashaw horse—Jackson'd Virginia thoroughbred—had a race—'n'Jackson wanted to shoot me 'n'I wanted to shoot Jackson. 'N'then we all went to the Red Heifer—"

"What the deuce is the Red Heifer?" I asked.

"'N'dishtillery over a shpring, 'n'they blow a horn when the liquor runsh. 'N'then we had supper in Major Lewish's tavern. Major Lewis came in with roast pig on platter. You know roast pig, Davy? . . . 'N'Jackson pulls out's hunting knife n'waves it very mashestic. . . . You know how mashestic Jackson is when he—wantshtobe?" He let go my shoulder, brushed back his hair in a fiery manner, and, seizing a knife which unhappily lay on the table, gave me a graphic illustration of Mr. Jackson about to carve the pig, I retreating, and he coming on. "N'when he stuck the pig, Davy,—"

He poised the knife for an instant in the air, and then, before I could interpose, he brought it down deftly through the head of my precious drum, and such a frightful, agonized squeal filled the room that even I shivered involuntarily, and for an instant I had a vivid vision of a pig struggling in the hands of a butcher. I laughed in spite of myself. But Nick regarded me soberly.

"Funny thing, Davy," he said, "they all left the room." For a moment he appeared to be ruminating on this singular phenomenon. Then he continued: "'N'Jackson was back firsh, 'n'he was damned impolite . . . 'n'he shook his fist in my face" (here Nick illustrated Mr. Jackson's gesture), "'n'he said, 'Great God, sir, y'have a fine talent, but if y'ever do that again, I'll—I'll kill you.' . . . That'sh what he said, Davy."

"How long have you been in Nashville, Nick?" I asked.

"A year," he said, "lookin' after property I won rattle-an'-shnap—you remember?"

"And why didn't you let me know you were in Nashville?" I asked, though I realized the futility of the question.

"Thought you was—mad at me," he answered, "but you ain't, Davy. You've been very good-natured t' let me have your drum." He straightened. "I am ver' much obliged."

"And where were you before you went to Nashville?" I said.

"Charleston, 'Napolis . . . Philadelphia . . . everywhere," he answered.

"Now," said he, "'mgoin' t' bed."

I applauded this determination, but doubted whether he meant to carry it out. However, I conducted him to the back room, where he sat himself down on the edge of my four-poster, and after conversing a little longer on the subject of Mr. Jackson (who seemed to have gotten upon his brain), he toppled over and instantly fell asleep with his clothes on. For a while I stood over him, the old affection welling up so strongly within me

that my eyes were dimmed as I looked upon his face. Spare and handsome it was, and boyish still, the weaker lines emphasized in its relaxation. Would that relentless spirit with which he had been born make him, too, a wanderer forever? And was it not the strangest of fates which had impelled him to join this madcap expedition of this other man I loved, George Rogers Clark?

I went out, closed the door, and lighting another candle took from my portfolio a packet of letters. Two of them I had not read, having found them only on my return from Philadelphia that morning. They were all signed simply "Sarah Temple," they were dated at a certain number in the Rue Bourbon, New Orleans, and each was a tragedy in that which it had left unsaid. There was no suspicion of heroics, there was no railing at fate; the letters breathed but the one hope,—that her son might come again to that happiness of which she had robbed him. There were in all but twelve, and they were brief, for some affliction had nearly deprived the lady of the use of her right hand. I read them twice over, and then, despite the lateness of the hour, I sat staring at the candles, reflecting upon my own helplessness. I was startled from this reverie by a knock. Rising hastily, I closed the door of my bedroom, thinking I had to do with some drunken reveller who might be noisy. The knock was repeated. I slipped back the bolt and peered out into the night.

"I saw dat light," said a voice which I recognized; "I think I come in to say good night."

I opened the door, and he walked in.

"You are one night owl, Monsieur Reetchie," he said.

"And you seem to prefer the small hours for your visits, Monsieur de St. Gré," I could not refrain from replying.

He swept the room with a glance, and I thought a shade of disappointment passed over his face. I wondered whether he were looking for Nick. He sat himself down in my chair, stretched out his legs, and regarded me with something less than his usual complacency.

"I have much laik for you, Monsieur Reetchie," he

began, and waved aside my bow of acknowledgment. "Before I go away from Louisville I want to spik with you,—this is a risson why I am here. You listen to what dat Depeau he say,—dat is not truth. My family knows you, I laik to have you hear de truth."

He paused, and while I wondered what revelations he was about to make, I could not repress my impatience at the preamble.

"You are my frien', you have prove it," he continued. "You remember las' time we meet?" (I smiled involuntarily.) "You was in bed, but you not need be ashame' for me. Two days after I went to France, and I not in New Orleans since."

"Two days after you saw me?" I repeated.

"Yaas, I run away. That was the mont' of August, 1789, and we have not then heard in New Orleans that the Bastille is attack. I lan' at La Havre,—it is the en' of Septembre. I go to the Château de St. Gré—great iron gates, long avenue of poplar,—big house all 'round a court, and Monsieur le Marquis is at Versailles. I borrow three louis from the *concierge*, and I go to Versailles to the hotel of Monsieur le Marquis. There is all dat trouble what you read about going on, and Monsieur le Marquis he not so glad to see me for dat risson. '*Mon cher Auguste,*' he cry, 'you want to be *officier* in *gardes du corps*? You are not afred?'" (Auguste stiffened.) "'I am a St. Gré, Monsieur le Marquis. I am afred of nothings,' I answered. He tek me to the King, I am made *lieutenant*, the mob come and the King and Queen are carry off to Paris. The King is prisoner, Monsieur le Marquis goes back to the Château de St. Gré. France is a republic. Monsieur—*que voulez-vous?*" (The Sieur de St. Gré shrugged his shoulders.) "I, too, become Republican. I become *officier* in the National Guard,—one must move with the time. Is it not so, Monsieur? I deman' of you if you ever expec' to see a St. Gré a Republican."

I expressed my astonishment.

"I give up my right, my principle, my family. I come

to America—I go to New Orleans where I have influence and I stir up revolution for France, for Liberty. Is it not noble cause?"

I had it on the tip of my tongue to ask Monsieur Auguste why he left France, but the uselessness of it was apparent.

"You see, Monsieur, I am justify before you, before my frien's,—that is all I care," and he gave another shrug in defiance of the world at large. "What I have done, I have done for principle. If I remain Royalist, I might have marry my cousin, Mademoiselle de St. Gré. Ha, Monsieur, you remember—the miniature you were so kin' as to borrow me four hundred livres?"

"I remember," I said.

"It is because I have much confidence in you, Monsieur," he said, "it is because I go—*peut-être*—to dangere, to death, that I come here and ask you to do me a favor."

"You honor me too much, Monsieur," I answered, though I could scarce refrain from smiling.

"It is because of your charactair," Monsieur Auguste was good enough to say. "You are to be repose' in, you are to be rely on. Sometime I think you ver' ole man. And this is why, and sence you laik objects of art, that I bring this and ask you keep it while I am in dangere."

I was mystified. He thrust his hand into his coat and drew forth an oval object wrapped in dirty paper, and then disclosed to my astonished eyes the miniature of Mademoiselle de St. Gré,—the miniature, I say, for the gold back and setting were lacking. Auguste had retained only the ivory,—whether from sentiment or necessity I will not venture. The sight of it gave me a strange sensation, and I can scarcely write of the anger and disgust which surged over me, of the longing to snatch it from his trembling fingers. Suddenly I forgot Auguste in the lady herself. There was something emblematical in the misfortune which had bereft the picture of its setting. Even so the Revolution had taken from her a brilliant life, a king and queen, home and friends. Yet the spirit

remained unquenchable, set above its mean surroundings, — ay, and untouched by them. I was filled with a painful curiosity to know what had become of her, which I repressed. Auguste's voice aroused me.

"Ah, Monsieur, is it not a face to love, to adore?"

"It is a face to obey," I answered, with some heat, and with more truth than I knew.

"*Mon Dieu*, Monsieur, it is so. It is that mek me love — you know not how. You know not what love is, Monsieur Reetchie, you never love laik me. You have not sem risson. Monsieur," he continued, leaning forward and putting his hand on my knee, "I think she love me — I am not sure. I should not be surprise'. But Monsieur le Marquis, her father, he trit me ver' bad. Monsieur le Marquis is guillotine' now, I mus' not spik evil of him, but he marry her to one ol' *garçon*, Le Vicomte d'Ivry-le-Tour."

"So Mademoiselle is married," I said after a pause.

"*Oui*, she is Madame la Vicomtesse now; I fall at her feet jus' the sem. I hear of her once at Bel Oeil, the château of Monsieur le Prince de Ligne in Flander'. After that they go I know not where. They are exile', — los' to me." He sighed, and held out the miniature to me. "Monsieur, I esk you favor. Will you be as kin' and keep it for me again?"

I have wondered many times since why I did not refuse. Suffice it to say that I took it. And Auguste's face lighted up.

"I am a thousan' times gret'ful," he cried; and added, as though with an afterthought, "Monsieur, would you be so kin' as to borrow me fif' dollars?"

CHAPTER IV

OF A SUDDEN RESOLUTION

It was nearly morning when I fell asleep in my chair, from sheer exhaustion, for the day before had been a hard one, even for me. I awoke with a start, and sat for some minutes trying to collect my scattered senses. The sun streamed in at my open door, the birds hopped on the lawn, and the various sounds of the bustling life of the little town came to me from beyond. Suddenly, with a glimmering of the mad events of the night, I stood up, walked uncertainly into the back room, and stared at the bed.

It was empty. I went back into the outer room; my eye wandered from the shattered whiskey bottle, which was still on the floor, to the table littered with Mrs. Temple's letters. And there, in the midst of them, lay a note addressed with my name in a big, unformed hand. I opened it mechanically.

"Dear Davy," — so it ran, — "I have gone away, I cannot tell you where. Some day I will come back and you will forgive me. God bless you! NICK."

He had gone away! To New Orleans? I had long ceased trying to account for Nick's actions, but the more I reflected, the more incredible it seemed to me that he should have gone there, of all places. And yet I had had it from Clark's own lips (indiscreet enough now!) that Nick and St. Gré were to prepare the way for an insurrection there. My thoughts ran on to other possibilities; would he see his mother? But he had no reason to know that Mrs. Temple was still in New Orleans. Then my glance fell on her letters, lying open on the table. Had he