

with a self-confessed multiple murderer, who had presumably escaped only by a further and extended series of crimes.

"But you ask," pursued Duguesclin, "you ask how I escaped? That, sir, is the story I propose to tell you. My previous remarks have been but preliminary: they have no pertinence or interest, I am aware; but they were necessary, since you so kindly expressed interest in my personality, my family history—heroic (I may claim it) as is the one, and tragic (no one will deny it) as is the other."

Bevan again reflected that his interlocutor must be as bad a psychologist as the governor of Devil's Island was a good one; for he had neither expressed nor felt the smallest concern with either of these matters.

"Well, sir, to my story! Among the convicts there was one universal pleasure, a pleasure that could cease only with life or with the empire of the reason, a pleasure that the governor might (and did) indeed constrict, but could not take away. I refer to hope—the hope of escape. Yes, sir, that spark (alone of all its ancient fires) burned in this breast—and in that of my fellow convicts. And in this I did not look so much to myself as to another. I am not endowed with any great intellect," he modestly pursued, "my grandmother was pure English, a Higginbotham, one of the Warwickshire Higginbothams ("what has that to do with his stupidity?" thought Bevan), and the majority of my companions were men not only devoid of intelligence, but of education. The one pinnacled exception was the great Dodu—ha! you start?" Bevan had not done anything of the sort; he had continued to exhibit the most stolid indifference to the story.

"Yes, you are not mistaken: it was indeed the world-famous philosopher, the discoverer of Dodium, rarest of known elements, supposed only to exist in the universe to the extent of the thirty-thousand and fifth part of a milligramme, and that in the star called y

Pegasi: it was Dodu who had shattered the logical process of obversion, and reduced the quadrangle of oppositions to the condition of the British square at Abu-Klea. So much you know: but this perhaps you did not know, that, although a civilian, he was the greatest strategist of France. It was he, who in his cabinet made the dispositions of the armies of the Ardennes; and the 1890 scheme of the fortifications of Luneville was due to his genius alone. For this reason the government were loth to condemn him, though public opinion revolted bitterly against his crime. You remember that, having proved that, after the age of fifty, women were a useless burden to the State, he had demonstrated his belief by decapitating and devouring his widowed mother. It was consequently the intention of the government to connive at his escape on the voyage, and to continue to employ him under an assumed name in a flat in an entirely different quarter of Paris. However, the government fell suddenly; a rival ousted him, and his sentence was carried out with as much severity as if he had been a common criminal.

"It was to such a man, naturally, that I looked to devise a plan for our escape. But rack my brains as I would—my grandmother was a Warwickshire Higginbotham—I could devise no means of getting into touch with him. He must, however, have divined my wishes; for, one day after he had been about a month upon the island (I had been there seven months myself), he stumbled and fell as if struck by the sun at a moment when I was close to him. And as he lay upon the ground he managed to pinch my ankle three times. I caught his glance—he hinted rather than gave me the sign of recognition of the fraternity of Freemasons. Are you a Mason?"

"I am Past Provincial Deputy Grand Sword-Bearer of this province," returned Bevan. "I founded Lodge 14, 883, 'Boetic,' and Lodge 17, 212, 'Colenso,' and I am Past Grand Haggai in my Provincial Grand Chapter."