'Lud! sir, I suppose they talked 'im over. Those Frenchies, I've 'eard it said, 'ave got the gift of gab—and Mr 'Empseed 'ere will tell you 'ow it is that they just twist some people round their little finger like.'

'Indeed, and is that so, Mr Hempseed?' inquired the stranger politely.

'Nay, sir!' replied Mr Hempseed, much irritated, 'I dunno as I can give you the information you require.'

'Faith, then,' said the stranger, 'let us hope, my worthy host, that these clever spies will not succeed in upsetting your extremely loyal opinions.'

But this was too much for Mr Jellyband's pleasant equanimity. He burst into an uproarious fit of laughter, which was soon echoed by those who happened to be in his debt.

'Hahaha! hohoho! hehehe!' He laughed in every key, did my worthy host, and laughed until his sides ached, and his eyes streamed. 'At me! hark at that! Did ye 'ear 'im say that they'd be upsettin' my opinions?—Eh?—Lud love you, sir, but you do say some queer things.'

'Well, Mr Jellyband,' said Mr Hempseed, sententiously, 'you know what the Scriptures say: "Let 'im 'oo stands take 'eed lest 'e fall.[5]"'

'But then hark'ee, Mr 'Empseed,' retorted Jellyband, still holding his sides with laughter, 'the Scriptures didn't know me. Why, I wouldn't so much as drink a glass of ale with one o' them murderin' Frenchmen, and nothin' 'd make me change my opinions. Why! I've 'eard it said that them frog-eaters can't even speak the King's English, so, of course, if any of 'em tried to speak their God-forsaken lingo to me, why, I should spot them directly, see!—and forewarned is forearmed, as the saying goes.'

[5] 1 Corinthians 10:12

'Aye! my honest friend,' assented the stranger cheerfully, 'I see that you are much too sharp, and a match for any twenty Frenchmen, and here's to your very good health, my worthy host, if you'll do me the honour to finish this bottle of mine with me.'

'I am sure you're very polite, sir,' said Mr Jellyband, wiping his eyes which were still streaming with the abundance of his laughter, 'and I don't mind if I do.'

The stranger poured out a couple of tankards full of wine, and having offered one to mine host, he took the other himself.

'Loyal Englishmen as we all are,' he said, whilst the same humorous smile played round the corners of his thin lips—'loyal as we are, we must admit that this at least is one good thing which comes to us from France.'

'Aye! we'll none of us deny that, sir,' assented mine host.

'And here's to the best landlord in England, our worthy host, Mr Jellyband,' said the stranger in a loud tone of voice.

'Hip, hip, hurrah!' retorted the whole company present. Then there was loud clapping of hands, and mugs and tankards made a rattling music upon the tables to the accompaniment of loud laughter at nothing in particular, and of Mr Jellyband's muttered exclamations:

'Just fancy *me* bein' talked over by any God-forsaken furriner! —What?—Lud love you, sir, but you do say some queer things.'

To which obvious fact the stranger heartily assented. It was certainly a preposterous suggestion that anyone could ever upset Mr Jellyband's firmly-rooted opinions anent the utter worthlessness of the inhabitants of the whole continent of Europe.

But Mr Jellyband had at last succeeded in getting upon his favourite hobby-horse, and had no intention of dismounting in any hurry.

'Or maybe you've made friends with some of them French chaps 'oo they do say have come over here o' purpose to make us Englishmen agree with their murderin' ways.'

'I dunno what you mean, Mr Jellyband,' suggested Mr Hempseed, 'all I know is—'

'All *I* know is,' loudly asserted mine host, 'that there was my friend Peppercorn, 'oo owns the "Blue-Faced Boar," an' as true and loyal an Englishman as you'd see in the land. And now look at 'im!—'E made friends with some o' them frog-eaters, 'obnobbed with them just as if they was Englishmen, and not just a lot of immoral, God-forsaking furrin' spies. Well! and what happened? Peppercorn 'e now ups and talks of revolutions, and liberty, and down with the aristocrats, just like Mr 'Empseed over 'ere!'

'Pardon me, Mr Jellyband,' again interposed Mr Hempseed, feebly, 'I dunno as I ever did—'

Mr Jellyband had appealed to the company in general, who were listening awe-struck and open-mouthed at the recital of Mr Peppercorn's defalcations. At one table two customers—gentlemen apparently by their clothes—had pushed aside their half-finished game of dominoes, and had been listening for some time, and evidently with much amusement at Mr Jellyband's international opinions. One of them now, with a quiet, sarcastic smile still lurking round the corners of his mobile mouth, turned towards the centre of the room where Mr Jellyband was standing.

'You seem to think, mine honest friend,' he said quietly, 'that these Frenchmen—spies I think you called them—are mighty clever fellows to have made mincemeat so to speak of your friend Mr Peppercorn's opinions. How did they accomplish that now, think you?'

'Now then, Sally, me girl, now then!' he said, trying to force a frown upon his good-humoured face, 'stop that fooling with them young jackanapes and get on with the work.'

'The work's gettin' on all ri', father.'

But Mr Jellyband was peremptory. He had other views for his buxom daughter, his only child, who would in God's good time become the owner of 'The Fisherman's Rest,' than to see her married to one of these young fellows who earned but a precarious livelihood with their net.

'Did ye hear me speak, me girl?' he said in that quiet tone, which no one inside the inn dared to disobey. 'Get on with my Lord Tony's supper, for, if it ain't the best we can do, and 'e not satisfied, see what you'll get, that's all.'

Reluctantly Sally obeyed.

'Is you 'xpecting special guests then to-night, Mr Jellyband?' asked Jimmy Pitkin, in a loyal attempt to divert his host's attention from the circumstances connected with Sally's exit from the room.

'Aye! that I be,' replied Jellyband, 'friends of my Lord Tony hisself. Dukes and duchesses from over the water yonder, whom the young lord and his friend, Sir Andrew Ffoulkes, and other young noblemen have helped out of the clutches of them murderin' devils.'

But this was too much for Mr Hempseed's querulous philosophy.

'Lud!' he said, 'what they do that for, I wonder? I don't 'old not with interferin' in other folks' ways. As the Scriptures say—'

'Maybe, Mr 'Empseed,' interrupted Jellyband, with biting sarcasm, 'as you're a personal friend of Mr Pitt, and as you says along with Mr Fox: "Let 'em murder!" says you.'

'Pardon me, Mr Jellyband,' feebly protested Mr Hempseed, 'I dunno as I ever did.'

Chapter 3

The Refugees

FEELING in every part of England certainly ran very high at this time against the French and their doings. Smugglers and legitimate traders between the French and English coasts brought snatches of news from over the water, which made every honest Englishman's blood boil, and made him long to have 'a good go' at those murderers, who had imprisoned their king and all his family, subjected the queen and the royal children to every species of indignity, and were even now loudly demanding the blood of the whole Bourbon family and of every one of its adherents.

The execution of the Princesse de Lamballe[1], Marie Antoinette's young and charming friend, had filled everyone in England with unspeakable horror, the daily execution of scores of royalists of good family, whose only sin was their aristocratic name, seemed to cry for vengeance to the whole of civilised Europe.

Yet, with all that, no one dared to interfere. Burke had exhausted all his eloquence in trying to induce the British Government to fight the revolutionary government of France, but Mr Pitt, with characteristic prudence, did not feel that this country was fit yet to embark on another arduous and costly war[2]. It was for Austria to take the initiative; Austria, whose fairest daughter

[1] Marie Thérèse Louise of Savoy (1749-1792), a victim of mob violence on September 3rd 1792.

[2] Fighting the American Revolutionary War, which had concluded nine years earlier in 1781, had doubled the British national debt.

was even now a dethroned queen[3], imprisoned and insulted by a howling mob; and surely 'twas not—so argued Mr Fox—for the whole of England to take up arms, because one set of Frenchmen chose to murder another.

As for Mr Jellyband and his fellow John Bulls, though they looked upon all foreigners with withering contempt, they were royalist and anti-revolutionists to a man, and at this present moment were furious with Pitt for his caution and moderation, although they naturally understood nothing of the diplomatic reasons which guided that great man's policy.

But now Sally came running back, very excited and very eager. The joyous company in the coffee-room had heard nothing of the noise outside, but she had spied a dripping horse and rider who had stopped at the door of 'The Fisherman's Rest,' and while the stable boy ran forward to take charge of the horse, pretty Miss Sally went to the front door to greet the welcome visitor.

'I think I see'd my Lord Antony's horse out in the yard, father,' she said, as she ran across the coffee-room.

But already the door had been thrown open from outside, and the next moment an arm, covered in drab cloth and dripping with the heavy rain, was round pretty Sally's waist, while a hearty voice echoed along the polished rafters of the coffee-room.

'Aye, and bless your brown eyes for being so sharp, my pretty Sally,' said the man who had just entered, whilst worthy Mr Jellyband came bustling forward, eager, alert and fussy, as became the advent of one of the most favoured guests of his hostel.

'Lud, I protest, Sally,' added Lord Antony, as he deposited a kiss on Miss Sally's blooming cheeks, 'but you are growing prettier and prettier every time I see you—and my honest friend, Jellyband

[3]Marie Antoinette (1755-1793) had been born Archduchess Maria Antonia of Austria.

Mr Pitt[2] and Mr Fox[3] and Mr Burke[4] a-fightin' and a-wranglin' between them, if we Englishmen should 'low them to go on in their ungodly way. "Let 'em murder!" says Mr Pitt. "Stop 'em!" says Mr Burke.'

'And let 'em murder, says I, and be demmed to 'em,' said Mr Hempseed, emphatically, for he had but little liking for his friend Jellyband's political arguments, wherein he always got out of his depth, and had but little chance for displaying those pearls of wisdom which had earned for him so high a reputation in the neighbourhood and so many free tankards of ale at 'The Fisherman's Rest.'

'Let 'em murder,' he repeated again, 'but don't let's 'ave sich rain in September, for that is agin the law and the Scriptures which says—'

'Lud! Mr 'Arry, 'ow you made me jump!'

It was unfortunate for Sally and her flirtation that this remark of hers should have occurred at the precise moment when Mr Hempseed was collecting his breath, in order to deliver himself of one of those Scriptural utterances which had made him famous, for it brought down upon her pretty head the full flood of her father's wrath.

[2]William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) was the Prime Minister of Great Britain at the time. His party, the Tories, generally opposed the French Revolution and took the Royalist view that the post-revolutionary government in France (the French First Republic, 1792-1804) was illegitimate.

[3]Charles James Fox (1749-1806) was Pitt's archrival in Parliament. His party, the Whigs, had been critical of Britain's actions leading up to the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), though they generally stopped short of actually *supporting* American independence. Fox was the leader of the liberal Whig faction, the New Whigs, who *had* supported the American Revolution and who *did* support the French Revolution.

[4]Edmund Burke (1729-1797) was the leader of the conservative Whig faction, the Old Whigs, who argued that the French Revolution had gone much too far and was destroying society.

'Aye! you wouldn't rec'llect the first three years of them sixty, Mr Jellyband,' quietly interposed Mr Hempseed. 'I dunno as I ever see'd an infant take much note of the weather, leastways not in these parts, an' *I*'ve lived 'ere nigh on seventy-five years, Mr Jellyband.'

The superiority of this wisdom was so incontestable that for the moment Mr Jellyband was not ready with his usual flow of argument.

'It do seem more like April than September, don't it?' continued Mr Hempseed, dolefully, as a shower of raindrops fell with a sizzle upon the fire.

'Aye! that it do,' assented the worthy host, 'but then what can you 'xpect, Mr 'Empseed, I says, with sich a government as we've got?'

Mr Hempseed shook his head with an infinity of wisdom, tempered by deeply-rooted mistrust of the British climate and the British Government.

'I don't 'xpect nothing, Mr Jellyband,' he said. 'Pore folks like us is of no account up there in Lunnon, I knows that, and it's not often as I do complain. But when it comes to sich wet weather in September, and all me fruit a-rottin' and a-dyin' like the 'Guptian mother's first-born, and doin' no more good than they did, pore dears, save to a lot of Jews, pedlars and sich, with their oranges and sich like foreign ungodly fruit, which nobody'd buy if English apples and pears was nicely swelled. As the Scriptures say—'

'That's quite right, Mr 'Empseed,' retorted Jellyband, 'and as I says, what can you 'xpect? There's all them Frenchy devils over the Channel yonder a-murderin' their king and nobility, and

here, must have hard work to keep the fellows off that slim waist of yours. What say you, Mr Waite?'

Mr Waite—torn between his respect for my lord and his dislike of that particular type of joke—only replied with a doubtful grunt.

Lord Antony Dewhurst, one of the sons of the Duke of Exeter, was in those days a very perfect type of a young English gentleman—tall, well set-up, broad of shoulders and merry of face, his laughter rang loudly wherever he went. A good sportsman, a lively companion, a courteous, well-bred man of the world, with not too much brains to spoil his temper, he was a universal favourite in London drawing-rooms or in the coffee-rooms of village inns. At 'The Fisherman's Rest' everyone knew him—for he was fond of a trip across to France, and always spent a night under worthy Mr Jellyband's roof on his way there or back.

He nodded to Waite, Pitkin and the others as he at last released Sally's waist, and crossed over to the hearth to warm and dry himself: as he did so, he cast a quick, somewhat suspicious glance at the two strangers, who had quietly resumed their game of dominoes, and for a moment a look of deep earnestness, even of anxiety, clouded his jovial young face.

But only for a moment; the next he had turned to Mr Hempseed, who was respectfully touching his forelock.

'Well, Mr Hempseed, and how is the fruit?'

'Badly, my lord, badly,' replied Mr Hempseed, dolefully, 'but what can you 'xpect with this 'ere government favourin' them rascals over in France, who would murder their king and all their nobility.'

'Odd's life!' retorted Lord Antony; 'so they would, honest Hempseed,—at least those they can get hold of, worse luck! But we have got some friends coming here to-night, who at any rate have evaded their clutches.'

It almost seemed, when the young man said these words, as if he threw a defiant look towards the quiet strangers in the corner.

'Thanks to you, my lord, and to your friends, so I've heard it said,' said Mr Jellyband.

But in a moment Lord Antony's hand fell warningly on mine host's arm.

'Hush!' he said peremptorily, and instinctively once again looked towards the strangers.

'Oh! Lud love you, they are all right, my lord,' retorted Jellyband; 'don't you be afraid. I wouldn't have spoken, only I knew we were among friends. That gentleman over there is as true and loyal a subject of King George as you are yourself, my lord, saving your presence. He is but lately arrived in Dover, and is settling down in business in these parts.'

'In business? Faith, then, it must be as an undertaker, for I vow I never beheld a more rueful countenance.'

'Nay, my lord, I believe that the gentleman is a widower, which no doubt would account for the melancholy of his bearing—but he is a friend, nevertheless, I'll vouch for that—and you will own, my lord, that who should judge of a face better than the landlord of a popular inn—'

'Oh, that's all right, then, if we are among friends,' said Lord Antony, who evidently did not care to discuss the subject with his host. 'But, tell me, you have no one else staying here, have you?'

'No one, my lord, and no one coming, either, leastways—'

'Leastways?'

'No one your lordship would object to, I know.'

'Who is it?'

'Well, my lord, Sir Percy Blakeney and his lady will be here presently, but they ain't a-goin' to stay—'

'Lady Blakeney?' queried Lord Antony, in some astonishment.

'Aye, my lord. Sir Percy's skipper was here just now. He says that my lady's brother is crossing over to France to-day in the *Day Dream*, which is Sir Percy's yacht, and Sir Percy and my lady will

They were mostly fisher-folk who patronised Mr Jellyband's coffee-room, but fishermen are known to be very thirsty people; the salt which they breathe in, when they are on the sea, accounts for their parched throats when on shore. But 'The Fisherman's Rest' was something more than a rendezvous for these humble folk. The London and Dover coach started from the hostel daily, and passengers who had come across the Channel, and those who started for the 'grand tour,' all became acquainted with Mr Jellyband, his French wines and his home-brewed ales.

It was towards the close of September, 1792, and the weather which had been brilliant and hot throughout the month had suddenly broken up; for two days torrents of rain had deluged the south of England, doing its level best to ruin what chances the apples and pears and late plums had of becoming really fine, self-respecting fruit. Even now it was beating against the leaded windows, and tumbling down the chimney, making the cheerful wood fire sizzle in the hearth.

'Lud! did you ever see such a wet September, Mr Jellyband?' asked Mr Hempseed.

He sat in one of the seats inside the hearth, did Mr Hempseed, for he was an authority and an important personage not only at 'The Fisherman's Rest,' where Mr Jellyband always made a special selection of him as a foil for political arguments, but throughout the neighbourhood, where his learning and notably his knowledge of the Scriptures was held in the most profound awe and respect. With one hand buried in the capacious pockets of his corduroys underneath his elaborately-worked, well-worn smock, the other holding his long clay pipe, Mr Hempseed sat there looking dejectedly across the room at the rivulets of moisture which trickled down the window panes.

'No,' replied Mr Jellyband, sententiously, 'I dunno, Mr 'Empseed, as I ever did. An' I've been in these parts nigh on sixty years.'

Facing the hearth, his legs wide apart, a long clay pipe in his mouth, stood mine host himself, worthy Mr Jellyband, landlord of 'The Fisherman's Rest,' as his father had been before him, aye, and his grandfather and great-grandfather too, for that matter. Portly in build, jovial in countenance and somewhat bald of pate, Mr Jellyband was indeed a typical rural John Bull[1] of those days—the days when our prejudiced insularity was at its height, when to an Englishman, be he lord, yeoman, or peasant, the whole of the continent of Europe was a den of immorality, and the rest of the world an unexploited land of savages and cannibals.

There he stood, mine worthy host, firm and well set up on his limbs, smoking his long churchwarden and caring nothing for nobody at home, and despising everybody abroad. He wore the typical scarlet waistcoat, with shiny brass buttons, the corduroy breeches, the grey worsted stockings and smart buckled shoes, that characterised every self-respecting innkeeper in Great Britain in these days—and while pretty, motherless Sally had need of four pairs of brown hands to do all the work that fell on her shapely shoulders, worthy Jellyband discussed the affairs of nations with his most privileged guests.

The coffee-room indeed, lighted by two well-polished lamps, which hung from the raftered ceiling, looked cheerful and cosy in the extreme. Through the dense clouds of tobacco smoke that hung about in every corner, the faces of Mr Jellyband's customers appeared red and pleasant to look at, and on good terms with themselves, their host and all the world; from every side of the room loud guffaws accompanied pleasant, if not highly intellectual, conversation—while Sally's repeated giggles testified to the good use Mr Harry Waite was making of the short time she seemed inclined to spare him.

[1]Traditionally the name of the anthropomorphic personification of England.

come with him as far as here to see the last of him. It don't put you out, do it, my lord?'

'No, no, it doesn't put me out, friend; nothing will put me out, unless that supper is not the very best which Miss Sally can cook, and which has ever been served in "The Fisherman's Rest."'

'You need have no fear of that, my lord,' said Sally, who all this while had been busy setting the table for supper. And very gay and inviting it looked, with a large bunch of brilliantly coloured dahlias in the centre, and the bright pewter goblets and blue china about.

'How many shall I lay for, my lord?'

'Five places, pretty Sally, but let the supper be enough for ten at least—our friends will be tired, and, I hope, hungry. As for me, I vow I could demolish a baron of beef to-night.'

'Here they are, I do believe,' said Sally, excitedly, as a distant clatter of horses and wheels could now be distinctly heard, drawing rapidly nearer.

There was general commotion in the coffee-room. Everyone was curious to see my Lord Antony's swell friends from over the water. Miss Sally cast one or two quick glances at the little bit of mirror which hung on the wall, and worthy Mr Jellyband bustled out in order to give the first welcome himself to his distinguished guests. Only the two strangers in the corner did not participate in the general excitement. They were calmly finishing their game of dominoes, and did not even look once towards the door.

'Straight ahead, Comtesse, the door on your right,' said a pleasant voice outside.

'Aye! there they are, all right enough,' said Lord Antony, joyfully; 'off with you, my pretty Sally, and see how quickly you can dish up the soup.'

The door was thrown wide open, and, preceded by Mr Jellyband, who was profuse in his bows and welcomes, a party of four—two ladies and two gentlemen—entered the coffee-room.

'Welcome! Welcome to old England!' said Lord Antony, effusively, as he came eagerly forward with both hands outstretched towards the newcomers.

'Ah, you are Lord Antony Dewhurst, I think,' said one of the ladies, speaking with a strong foreign accent.

'At your service, Madame,' he replied, as he ceremoniously kissed the hands of both the ladies, then turned to the men and shook them both warmly by the hand.

Sally was already helping the ladies to take off their travelling cloaks, and both turned, with a shiver, towards the brightly-blazing hearth.

There was a general movement among the company in the coffee-room. Sally had bustled off to her kitchen, whilst Jellyband, still profuse with his respectful salutations, arranged one or two chairs around the fire. Mr Hempseed, touching his forelock, was quietly vacating the seat in the hearth. Everyone was staring curiously, yet deferentially, at the foreigners.

'Ah, Messieurs! what can I say?' said the elder of the two ladies, as she stretched a pair of fine, aristocratic hands to the warmth of the blaze, and looked with unspeakable gratitude first at Lord Antony, then at one of the young men who had accompanied her party, and who was busy divesting himself of his heavy, caped coat.

'Only that you are glad to be in England, Comtesse,' replied Lord Antony, 'and that you have not suffered too much from your trying voyage.'

'Indeed, indeed, we are glad to be in England,' she said, while her eyes filled with tears, 'and we have already forgotten all that we have suffered.'

Her voice was musical and low, and there was a great deal of calm dignity and of many sufferings nobly endured marked in the handsome, aristocratic face, with its wealth of snow-white hair dressed high above the forehead, after the fashion of the times.

and the long polished tables between, on which innumerable pewter tankards had left fantastic patterns of many-sized rings. In the leaded window, high up, a row of pots of scarlet geraniums and blue larkspur gave the bright note of colour against the dull background of the oak.

That Mr Jellyband, landlord of 'The Fisherman's Rest' at Dover, was a prosperous man, was of course clear to the most casual observer. The pewter on the fine old dressers, the brass above the gigantic hearth, shone like silver and gold—the red-tiled floor was as brilliant as the scarlet geranium on the window sill—this meant that his servants were good and plentiful, that the custom was constant, and of that order which necessitated the keeping up of the coffee-room to a high standard of elegance and order.

As Sally came in, laughing through her frowns, and displaying a row of dazzling white teeth, she was greeted with shouts and chorus of applause.

'Why, here's Sally! What ho, Sally! Hurrah for pretty Sally!'

'I thought you'd grown deaf in that kitchen of yours,' muttered Jimmy Pitkin, as he passed the back of his hand across his very dry lips.

'All ri'! all ri'!' laughed Sally, as she deposited the freshly-filled tankards upon the tables, 'why, what a 'urry, to be sure! And is your gran'mother a-dyin' an' you wantin' to see the pore soul afore she'm gone! I never see'd such a mighty rushin'!'

A chorus of good-humoured laughter greeted this witticism, which gave the company there present food for many jokes, for some considerable time. Sally now seemed in less of a hurry to get back to her pots and pans. A young man with fair curly hair, and eager, bright blue eyes, was engaging most of her attention and the whole of her time, whilst broad witticisms anent Jimmy Pitkin's fictitious grandmother flew from mouth to mouth, mixed with heavy puffs of pungent tobacco smoke.